

Mediterranea
International journal on the transfer of knowledge

Vol. 5 — 2020



Mediterranea
International journal on the transfer of knowledge

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Vol. 5 — 2020

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ARTICLES

IT'S RAINING CALVES: HISTORY AND SOURCES OF A SPURIOUS CITATION FROM AVICENNA IN ALBERT THE GREAT'S *METEOROLOGY*

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Abstract

The paper investigates the textual history of a citation attributed by Albert the Great to Avicenna and demonstrates its use, primarily in the debates on spontaneous generation, throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

Key Words

Albertus Magnus, Avicenna, Averroes, Spontaneous Generation, Medieval Meteorology.



In the history of every science, there are exemplary *lapsus* that served as a target for mockery to later generations of scholars, although the intentions of their authors or their exact source were often not taken into consideration. In law studies, such was the case of *ignorantia Accursiana*. Accursius (d. 1263), a famous professor of law at the university of Bologna, who compiled the glosses on the *Code of Justinian*, narrated a tale of how the Romans had got their laws from the Greeks involving a widely spread folklore motif of debating with gestures and implying, inter alia, that the Romans and Greeks discussed the problems of triadology long before Christ's birth.¹ This anachronism caused scornful remarks and heavy criticism from the Renaissance and Enlightenment scholars. Recent scholarship, however, sees a joke or entertainment in this passage.² In the present article, I will

¹ *Corpus iuris civilis Iustinianei, cum commentariis Accursii, scholiis Contii, et D. Gothofredi lucubrationibus ad Accursium (...) Tomus hic primus digestum vetus continet*, Lugduni 1627, col. 24. I am mostly grateful to Svetlana Kleyner, Remke Kruk, Jean-Marc Mandosio and Vera Tsukanova for their help and comments. I acknowledge support from the RSF grant No. 17-18-01624.

² See esp. GIORGIA MARAGNO, « Wie der weise Accursius für einen Narren gehalten wurde: Die Geschichte eines missverstandenen Scherzes », *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Romanistische Abteilung*, 132 (2015), p. 499–510, and, with a focus on the wanderings of the motif,

consider a story attributed to Avicenna by Albert the Great that aroused a similar reaction over the centuries that followed.

Despite its significant impact on the scholarly tradition and ample discussions in the Renaissance and Modern literature, this passage from Albert is only occasionally touched upon in recent studies.³ In order to give a comprehensive account, I will first present the story as it stands in the earliest source known to me and focus on its reception in the subsequent scholarship and literature, and then proceed to an attempt at tracing its origins.

I. *The story*

The earliest instance and the source of the later tradition is Albert the Great, *Meteora*, Lib. 3 Tract. 3 Cap. 20: « Et est digressio declarans, quid est, quod percutit de nube ».⁴ In this chapter, Albert addresses the question of what is it that strikes from the cloud – air or vapor, or both, or neither of them. He discusses an opinion that it can be neither air nor vapor because they cannot break more solid bodies while thunder can. Some adduce as evidence that stones, iron and other minerals happen to fall from above, none of which can be produced from vapor.

Some even say, once a body of a perfect animal such as a calf did fall, although dead.⁵

Albert himself, however, argues that the striking agent (if we may call it so) is either vapor with air or vapor alone, for they should not be considered *per se*, but in a rush and violent motion (*in impetu et violentia*). They are natural transmitters of strike force because they are less resistant to it and receive its energy, as we would say today, with minimal loss. Now, minerals falling from the clouds have nothing to do with the present question, but are explained by the mixed nature of

LAURENCE DE LOOZE, « To Understand Perfectly Is to Misunderstand Completely: 'The Debate in Signs' in France, Iceland, Italy and Spain », *Comparative Literature*, 50/2 (1998), p. 136–154.

³ Cf. HENDRIK C. D. DE WIT, *Histoire du développement de la biologie*, vol. III, trans. HENDRIK C. D. DE WIT, ANDRÉ BAUDIÈRE, Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes, Lausanne 1994, p. 373; PAOLA ZAMBELLI, *Una reincarnazione di Pico ai tempi di Pomponazzi, con l'edizione critica di Tiberio Russiliano Sesto Calabrese Apologeticus adversus cucullatos (1519)*, Il polifilo, Milano 1994 (Testi e documenti, 6), p. 87–88; LAURA A. SMOLLER, « Of Earthquakes, Hail, Frogs, and Geography: Plague and the Investigation of the Apocalypse in the Later Middle Ages », in CAROLINE WALKER BYNUM, PAUL FREEDMAN (eds.), *Last Things: Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, University of Pennsylvania press, Philadelphia 2000, p. 156–188, at p. 179; MAAIKE VAN DER LUGT, *Le ver, le démon et la vierge: Les théories médiévales de la generation extraordinaire: Une étude sur les rapports entre théologie, philosophie naturelle et médecine*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2004 (L'âne d'or, 20), p. 180.

⁴ ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Meteora*, in Id., *Opera omnia*, vol. VI/1, ed. Coloniensis, p. 171–172.

⁵ Ibid.: « Aliquando etiam dicitur cecidisse de nube corpus animalis perfecti sicut vituli, licet esset corpus mortuum ». Hereafter all translations are mine if not stated otherwise.

vapors, which is close to the nature of mercury and unpurified sulphur. That is why in most cases it is iron that falls from above, and since it becomes strongly boiled by the fire of the cloud, it falls in the form of the best steel (*chalybs*), and then, when it becomes frozen within the cloud, it distils as drops from inside the vapor and forms a mass as if consisting of millets. The minerals that fall from above are so desiccated that they cannot be liquefied and are not malleable, but being put into fire, evaporate turning into cinders. And here Albert mentions the fall of the calf for the second time:

However, the bodies of perfect animals are rarely formed in the cloud, although Avicenna says it happened once that the body of a calf fell, and attributes this mostly to the power of the stars imprinting the form of a calf at that time.⁶

I will discuss the role of Avicenna and the genuineness of this attribution later on in this article, but first I will focus on the reception of Albert's passage. In the following section, I will show how the calf story was being transmitted, how and to which ends exploited, which role it played in the subsequent scholarship and how the scholars' attitude changed.

II. Reception

The passages from Albert's *Meteora* were reproduced almost *verbatim* in the *Summa naturalium* (otherwise *Philosophia pauperum*) – a popular compilation of Albert's works which used to be attributed to Albert the Great and printed together with his writings, but now is held to be a work by his namesake and later contemporary Albert of Orlamünde, also a Dominican.⁷

The subsequent tradition considered this example predominantly in connection with the theory of spontaneous generation – a topic which I will discuss at length later on in this section. A different attitude was shown only by those authors who, like the chronicler Heinrich von Herford, did not seem to bother much about theoretical issues, or those who, like Franz von Retz, sought only to demonstrate the omnipotence of the Creator who is able to perform such miracles. Given such uniformity, it seems to be pointless to divide the sources into sub-groups according to the use they made of this citation. Instead, I will adduce

⁶ Ibid.: «Corpora autem animalium perfectorum raro formantur in nube, licet hoc semel dicat Avicenna contigisse quod corpus vituli cecidit, et hoc ipse maxime attribuit virtuti stellarum in tempore illo formam vituli imprimentium».

⁷ On the authorship see BERNARD GEYER, *Die Albert dem Grossen zugeschriebene Summa Naturalium (Philosophia Pauperum): Texte und Untersuchungen*, Verlag der Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, Münster 1938 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters, 35/1). For the passages in question see in *Alberti Magni Opera omnia*, ed. BORGNET, vol. V, p. 498–499.

them in a chronological order, drawing a line only between the medieval and humanistic periods, although this line is admittedly vague and transparent.

II.1. Medieval tradition

In the sermon on the Eucharist,⁸ Armand de Belvézer (d. 1334) draws an analogy between the miraculous transubstantiation and some natural phenomena, such as growing of acorns from a seed, but this parallel is even more closely demonstrated by the power of heaven which converts vapors into another nature – rain, hoarfrost, snow, hail, stones, fire, and sometimes into animals, such as frogs. Albert even says that once a calf fell down with the rain. And if such a conversion could be caused by the celestial material power, all the more powerful is the spiritual might in Christ.

In the *Pretiosa margarita novella*, written about 1330 by Petrus Bonus, the calf quotation is used as an argument against the opponents of alchemy.⁹ Among other confirmations, Petrus Bonus provides some analogies and examples to demonstrate the possibility of transformations and transmutations of species. A spontaneous generation naturally related to the generation from a clearly distinct source matter constitutes a perfect parallel to the transmutation of metals. Thus, he says that

Nature generates frogs in the clouds, either in dust moistened with rain, or by means of putrefaction by the ultimate disposition of a similar substance. Avicenna says that a calf was generated in the clouds with thunder and fell with the rain half alive. And he says that nature makes spontaneous generations in those [cases].¹⁰

⁸ ARMANDUS DE BELLO VISU, *Sermones de tempore, et de Sanctis per totum ferè annum declamabiles, e solo psalterio dauidico desumpti, exemplorum praesertim naturalium applicatione, prouerbiorum salibus, ac mirifica vbique eruditione refertissimi*, apud Petrum Mariam Marchettum, Brixiae 1610, p. 292. On its author see most recently SERGE-THOMAS BONINO, « Autour d'Armand de Belvézer. Le thomisme en France au xive siècle », *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 96/2 (2012), p. 233–267.

⁹ On the work and its author, Petrus Bonus, see LYNN THORNDIKE, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, Columbia University Press, New York 1934, vol. III, p. 147–162, who mentions this quotation (p. 162); ERIC JOHN HOLMYARD, *Alchemy*, Dover, New York 1990 (repr. Penguin Books, Harmondsworth 1957), p. 144, criticizes the argument as 'reckless'; cf. also WILLIAM R. NEWMAN, « Medieval Alchemy », in DAVID C. LINDBERG, MICHAEL H. SHANK (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Science*, vol. II: *Medieval Science*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2013, p. 397–398. On his use of meteorological treatises see CHIARA CRISCIANI, « Aristotele, Avicenna e Meteore nella *Pretiosa Margarita* di Pietro Bono », in CRISTINA VIANO (ed.), *Aristoteles Chemicus. Il IV libro dei 'Meteorologica' nella tradizione antica e medievale*, Academia, Sankt Augustin 2002 (International Aristotle Studies, 1), p. 165–182.

¹⁰ I am deviating from the English translation by ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE, *The New Pearl of Great Price: A Treatise Concerning the Treasure and Most Precious Stone of the Philosopher. Or the method and procedure of this divine art; with observations drawn from the works of Arnoldus, Raymondus, Rhasis, Albertus, and Michael Scotus*, J. Elliott and co., London 1894, p. 93–94, for the sake of accuracy. The Latin text is after JEAN JACQUES MANGET (ed.), *Bibliotheca chemica curiosa seu Rerum ad alchemiam pertinentium*

He then proceeds to mention other cases of generation from rotten flesh (bees from a calf, wasps from an ass etc.), the formation of minerals in the clouds – thunderstones and burnt iron that cannot be liquefied by fire, but evaporate as smoke and cinders, and cites some historical examples, such as the large iron meteorite that fell near Vergen and was brought to the king Corascenus who ordered to make swords from it, but proved immalleable. He mentions then that the Alamanic swords (*enses Alamanici*) are made from that kind of iron. A similar accident happened in Tepastris (*apud Tepastrem*). In some places water turns into stones, as sometimes also do animals and plants, and a loaf of bread underwent the same transformation near Corascem. These examples ultimately go back to Avicenna's *De mineralibus* (see below).

The calf from the sky occurs in the earliest known manuscript of the commentary on Ps.-Albert's *De secretis mulierum* – however, in a slightly different form.¹¹ This commented version was the most popular.¹² Here this example is included into the discussion of Avicenna's views on the Flood and the possibility of spontaneous generation of animals who then continue to propagate in a natural way.

thesaurus instructissimus: quo non tantum artis auriferae, ac scriptorum in ea nobiliorum historia traditur; lapidis veritas argumentis & experimentis, vol. II, sumpt. Chouet, G. de Tournes, Cramer, Perachon, Ritter et S. de Tournes, Genevae, 1702, p. 55: « Natura enim generat ranas in nubibus, aut in pulvere asperso pluvia, et per putrefactionem ex ultima dispositione materiae ad hoc propinquae. Et refert Avicenna, quod vitulus in nubibus generatus est cum tonitruis, et cecidit cum pluvia semivivus. Et dicit quod natura in talibus facit subitas generationes ».

¹¹ MS Utrecht, UB, 723, in the part dated to 1353, see LYNN THORNDIKE, « Further Consideration of the *Experimenta*, *Speculum astronomiae*, and *De secretis mulierum* Ascribed to Albertus Magnus », *Speculum*, 30 (1955), p. 413–443, at p. 438–429. Fol. 64r: « Item uero Auicenna posuit quendam vitulum cadere de celo quem dixit fuisse generatum in aere ex putrefactione ». The MS is available online at <<http://objects.library.uu.nl/reader/resolver.php?obj=002653865&type=2>>.

¹² See THORNDIKE, « Further Consideration », p. 429. On the various versions of the text with bibliography see KRISTIAN BOSSELMANN-CYRAN, '*Secreta mulierum*' mit Glosse in der deutschen Bearbeitung von Johann Hartlieb: *Text und Untersuchungen*, Wellm, Hannover 1985 (Würzburger medizinhistorische Forschungen, 36), p. 9–19, and BRITTA-JULIANE KRUSE, *Verborgene Heilkünste: Geschichte der Frauenmedizin im Spätmittelalter*, De Gruyter, Berlin – New York 1996 (Quellen und Forschungen zur Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte, 5), p. 18–22. This commentary was taken into the first prints of the *Secrets* where the same phrase can be found, cf. Ps.-ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De formatione hominis in vtero materno vel vt alij dicunt Secreta mulierum* [...], Johann Koelhoff d.Ä., Köln: ca. 1490, fol. Eiiiiv; ID., *De secretis mulierum et virorum*, Johann Froschauer, Augsburg, ca. 1503, fol. Dii^v. The original text of the *De secretis mulierum* can be consulted in JOSÉ PABLO BARRAGÁN NIETO, *El 'De secretis mulierum' atribuido a Alberto Magno: estudio, edición crítica y traducción*, FIDEM, Porto 2012 (Textes et études du Moyen âge, 63), p. 326–328; for English translation see HELEN RODNITE LEMAY (ed.), *Women's Secrets: A Translation of Pseudo-Albertus Magnus' De Secretis Mulierum with Commentaries*, State University of New York Press, Albany 1992, p. 96.

Heinrich von Herford (d. 1370) records in his *Chronicle* under 1346 a monstrous birth of a two-headed lamb and cites three *exempla* explicitly referring to Albert.¹³ The first, taken from *Physica* II, 3, 3, is a close analogy to the incident narrated by Heinrich, but the two others – the marvelous rain of frogs and fishes and the calf story – seem to be only loosely connected to the subject. Perhaps, Smoller is right in suggesting that « Heinrich seems to be thinking back to his entry for the previous year about the rain of toads and snakes in the east that preceded the outbreak of plague ».¹⁴ The form of the citation corresponds exactly to the source.

Blasius of Parma (d. 1416) accepts that animals such as a donkey can be generated in the air (*in media regione*) as well as any other animal belonging to an inferior species. In this, he follows Albert's quotation as he refers to the « bull mentioned by Avicenna », which is undoubtedly the same calf to whom this article is dedicated. However, he remarks that the stars cannot give an intellectual soul to the generated form, and for this reason the generation of a man in this way is impossible.¹⁵

The Article 188 of the Paris condemnations of 1277 which gives the list of erroneous points or statements to be repudiated is directed against the view « that if in any humor such a proportion could be attained by the power of the stars which is in parents' semens, then from that humor a man could be generated, and that a man could be generated from the putrefaction alone ».¹⁶ The anonymous commentary on the condemnations composed in the 15th cent. and designated by its first words *Quod Deus* (QD)¹⁷ asserts that

¹³ HENRICUS DE HERVORDIA, *Liber de rebus memorabilioribus sive chronicon Henrici de Hervordia*, ed. AUGUST POTTHAST, Gottingen 1859, p. 270.

¹⁴ SMOLLER, « Of Earthquakes, Hail, Frogs, and Geography », p. 179.

¹⁵ BLAISE DE PARME, *Questiones disputate super octo libros Physicorum*, II, q. 7: « [...] Video namque ranas moveri ab aere ibidem genitas, quod idem concedo de bove, ut ait Avicenna, et de asino, et ideo transeo ad secundam conclusionem quam dico esse simpliciter falsam et quando dicitur quod contingit materiam quamlibet disponi merito constelacionis nature, hoc tamen sive hoc concedatur sive non, merito astrorum numquam induceretur anima intellectiva que a Deo creata est, speciali gratia ipsius confluente. Et dico etiam quod si a media regione moveretur deorsum unum animal plasmatum ad instar forme humane, illud animal esset animal brutum nec esset homo » (quoted in VAN DER LUGT, *Le ver, le démon et la Vierge*, p. 180, fn. 209). However, the idea of spontaneous generation in the air is not his invention, and in this respect he can hardly be credited with intellectual independence as van der Lugt does.

¹⁶ DAVID PICHÉ, CLAUDE LAFLEUR (eds.), *La condamnation parisienne de 1277*, Vrin, Paris 1999 (Sic et non), p. 136: « Quod si in aliquo humore uirtute stellarum deueniretur ad talem proportionem cuiusmodi proportio est in seminibus parentum, ex illo humore posset generari homo; et quod homo posset sufficienter generari ex putrefactione ».

¹⁷ CLAUDE LAFLEUR, DAVID PICHÉ, JOANNE CARRIER, « Le statut de la philosophie dans le décret parisien de 1277 selon un commentateur anonyme du XVe siècle: étude historico-doctrinale, édition sélective et synopsis générale des sources du Commentaire *Quod Deus* » in JAN A. AERTSEN, KENT EMERY JR., ANDREAS SPEER (eds.), *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277: Philosophie und Theologie an der*

The proof of the falsity of this article is that it is impossible for a man to be generated by the power of the stars or planets from any humor because a humor alone cannot suffice for generating a man with regard to the matter or form deduced from the capability of the matter, but a substantial form is needed which is created by the glorious God alone and is not produced by influential power of the stars. And although the venerable master Albert in the fourth book of his *Summa* quotes that according to the noble Avicenna it once happened that a calf's body fell from the sphere of air, even if it had been true of the matter of a calf, it still could not be true of a man, for the substantial form of a man is created and not given by the power of the stars.¹⁸

QD refers here, as often, not directly to Albert, but to the compilation of his works (*Summa*) by Albert of Orlamünde. In this case, it has no textual consequences, for Albert of Orlamünde faithfully cites the *Meteora* of Albert the Great. It is interesting, however, that QD differs from both in making the calf fall not from the cloud (*de nube*), but from the air sphere (*de spera aeris*). In this, and in the general stance, it concurs with the text of Blasius of Parma.

Franz von Retz (d. 1427) included the calf argument into his *Defensorium inviolatae virginitatis beatae Mariae* – a collection of examples aimed at demonstrating that the Virgin Birth finds many *comparata* in other miraculous events. Albert was one of his principal sources alongside Isidore, Augustine, and Valerius Maximus. The *Defensorium* was transmitted in manuscripts, block-books and incunables, but the transmission came to an end with the rise of the Reformation.¹⁹ Among the illustrations in the first block-book edition (year 1470)

Universität von Paris im letzten Viertel des 13. Jahrhunderts: Studien und Texte, De Gruyter, Berlin – New York 2001 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 28), p. 931–1003.

¹⁸ For the Latin original see ROLAND HISSETTE, « Les recours et allusions à Albert le Grand dans deux commentaires du *Symbolum Parisinum* », in AERTSEN, EMERY, SPEER (eds.), *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277*, p. 873–888, at p. 878, fn. 41: « Ratio falsitatis illius articuli est ista, quia uirtute stellarum seu planetarum, tunc impossibile est quod generaretur homo ex humore aliquo, quia ad generationem hominis non sufficit humor tantummodo loco materie seu forme educte de potentia materie, sed requiritur forma substantialis que creatur tantummodo a Deo glorioso et non producitur a uirtute influentia stellarum. Et licet uenerabilis dominus Albertus Magnus, in quarto libro sue Summe, recitet quod nobilis Auicenna semel contigisse dicebat quod corpus uituli cecidit de spera aeris, tamen si hoc uerum fuisset de materia uituli, non tamen posset esse uerum de homine, quia forma substantialis hominis creatur et non datur uirtute stellarum ». See also ROLAND HISSETTE, « Le *Symbolum Parisinum*: Approche de trois commentaires médiévaux et evocation de doctrines significatives d'Albert le Grand », in GIANFRANCO FIORAVANTI, CLAUDIO LEONARDI, STEFANO PERFETTI (eds.), *Il commento filosofico nell'Occidente latino (secoli XIII–XV). Atti del colloquio Firenze–Pisa, 19–22 ottobre 2000*, Turnhout, Brepols 2002 (SIEPM – Rencontres de Philosophie Médiévale, 10), p. 469–498, at p. 480–481, fn. 61.

¹⁹ The manuscript transmission is attested since the mid-fifteenth century. On the *Defensorium* and its author see KLAUS GRUBMÜLLER, « Franz von Retz », in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon*, 2nd ed., vol. II, De Gruyter, Berlin – New York 1980, col. 834–837; BRUNO JAHN, « Franz von Retz », in WOLFGANG ACHNITZ (ed.), *Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon: Das Mittelalter*, vol II: Das

one sees a picture of a calf in a cloud pouring with rain.²⁰ The miracle is observed by a standing man and a kneeling woman (see Fig. 1, below). The text says:

Si vitulus in nube vi celi claret
Cur absque uiri pube uirgo non generaret
Albertus in metheororum tractatu iij capitulo xx^o.

The German translation (accompanied by the Latin text and an ekphrasis of the picture) is preserved in a 15th-century MS:²¹

Mochten dy wolken clear
Krengen ayn kelbelein,
So mocht auch Maria zwaer
Ayn mueter juncfraw sein.

As a part of the *Defensorium* tradition the citation was reproduced by Hans Folz (d. 1513) in his *Meisterlieder*,²² and by Sebastian Brant in his *Carmina in laudem virginis Mariae multorumque sanctorum* (c. 1498).²³

geistliche Schrifttum des Spätmittelalters, De Gruyter, Berlin – Boston 2011, col. 636–640; FRIEDRICH ZOEPLF, « *Defensorium inuolatae virginitatis Mariae* », in *Reallexikon zur deutsche Kunstgeschichte*, 3 (1954), p. 1206–1218; EWALD M. VETTER, *Mariologische Tafelbilder des 15. Jahrhunderts und das Defensorium des Franz von Retz. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Bildtypen im Mittelalter*, Diss. (masch.), Heidelberg 1954.

²⁰ I have used the exemplar München, Universitätsbibliothek, Cim. 49 (here fol. 7v), available online at <<http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0003/bsb00039969/images>>. For a detailed description see HELGA LENGENFELDER, WOLFGANG MÜLLER (eds.), *Bibel der Armen — Speculum humanae salvationis — Canticum canticorum — Ars memorandi — Defensorium virginitatis Mariae — Apocalypsis — Der Endkrist und die 15 Zeichen — Ars moriendi — Regiomontanus: Deutscher Kalender für 1475 bis 1530*, Edition Helga Lengenfelder, München, 2004 (Monumenta xylographica et typographica, 5), p. 44–49. The image is reproduced by permission of University Library of Munich.

²¹ JOSEF PURKART, « Franciscus de Retza: *Defensorium inuolatae virginitatis*: Eine unbekannte Hs. aus dem Stift Lambach (Oö) », *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur Älteren Germanistik*, 3 (1972), p. 181–99, at 188.

²² HANS FOLZ, *Die Meisterlieder des Hans Folz aus der Münchener Originalhandschrift und der Weimarer Handschrift Q. 566 mit Ergänzungen aus anderen Quellen*, ed. AUGUST L. MAYER, Weidmannschen Buchhandlung, Berlin 1908 (Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters, 12), p. 247, no. 65: « Mocht Zirce mit den meren / Die lewt in thir verkeren, / **Die lufft ein kalp geperen**, / Und sich/ Ein pach verkern in plute ».

²³ SEBASTIAN BRANT, *Narrenschiff*, ed. FRIEDRICH ZARNCKE, Leipzig 1854, p. 176–177 (*Contra judaeos et haereticos, conceptionem virginalem fuisse possibilem argumentatio*): « Lac calibem et lanam narrant pluitasse libelli / Desuper et iustum compluere aura potest / Et vitulam cecidisse legis de nube serena / Sic cadit aethereo missus ab imbre puer, / Nonne et florilegis apibus generatio casta est / Concipiet veram non quoque mater apim? »

II.2. Humanistic and modern tradition

With Andrea Cattani da Imola, we move on to the humanistic thought.²⁴ In the 6th Question of the 1st Tractatus *De intellectu*,²⁵ he discusses the possibility of asexual human generation and considers in this connection Avicenna's views as exposed in *De diluviis*, but also takes into account his example with scorpions from the xvth book of *De animalibus*, then he goes over to Albert's explanation of monstrous births (a piglet with a human head, *Physica*, VIII) and impressions in stones (a king's head with a beard and a crown, *De mineralibus*, II) and adds from his own experience one more case – a hermit's figure. In conclusion, he adduces the citation about the calf falling from the heaven with a correct reference both to Albert and Avicenna. Thus he gives a very elaborated and comprehensive summary of Avicenna's thoughts on the problem, taking advantage of the calf quote for the purpose of his argumentation.

Pietro Pomponazzi considered the opinions of Aristotle, Avicenna and Averroes on spontaneous generation in his lectures delivered in 1518. He sided with Avicenna and consequently rejected Averroes's arguments and criticism. At one point he adduces the citation from Albert, but in a form very different both from the original and from the rest of the tradition. It is to be noted that he seems not to discard this example altogether as he says that « although Albert was a man susceptible to tales (*vir fabulosus*), he is a serious man (*vir gravis*) ». Pomponazzi does not mention Avicenna in this case and attributes the calf story directly to Albert, maintaining that it occurred in his times. Moreover, he omits the effect of the stars, making Albert state instead that it was the Devil's (or demons') work.²⁶ To be sure, the text was not written by Pomponazzi himself, but recorded by his students, and the deviations could be accounted for as a result of their misunderstanding or misinterpreting. But since the two records mostly agree and

²⁴ On the problems discussed in this section in general and on some prominent authors see MARTIN CRAIG, *Renaissance Meteorology: Pomponazzi to Descartes*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 2011, esp. 93–102. On Italian Averroists see DAG NIKOLAUS HASSE, *Success and Suppression: Arabic Sciences and Philosophy in the Renaissance*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 2016 (I Tatti Studies in Italian Renaissance History, 19), esp. 179–248.

²⁵ ANDREA CATTANIUS, *Opus de intellectu et de causis mirabilium effectuum*, [Florence c. 1502?], c5r–c8r. On his views see PAOLA ZAMBELLI, « L'immaginazione e il suo potere: Da al-Kindī, al-Fārābī e Avicenna al Medioevo latino e al Rinascimento », in ALBERT ZIMMERMANN, INGRID CRAEMER-RUEGENBERG (eds.), *Orientalische Kultur und europäisches Mittelalter*, De Gruyter, Berlin – New York 1985 (Miscellanea mediaevalia, 17), p. 188–206.

²⁶ VITTORIA PERRONE COMPAGNI, « 'La stagione delli frumenti': Due lezioni di Pomponazzi sulla generazione spontanea », *Bruniana & Campanelliana*, 17 (2011), p. 199–219, at 215: « Et esto quod Albertus fuerit vir fabulosus, tamen est vir gravis. Dicit, iii Metheororum, tractatu iii iii libri, quod tempore suo pluit vitulus; et dicit quod fuit diabolus, qui fecit pluere. The second MS shows slight variation: Albertus dicit [...] quod tempore suo pluit vitulus; alii dicunt quod non fuit ibi generatus et quod daemones portaverunt illum in nubibus ».

contain the same errors, it can be also assumed that these were the lecturer's words.

The next author, Tiberio Russiliano, discusses the argument at great length in his *Apologeticus* (1519)²⁷ while dealing – just as Andrea Cattani – with the issue of human generation after the Flood. He also refers to Avicenna's treatise *De diluviis* and immediately thereafter proceeds to the calf incident, coming to the conclusion that man can also be generated without semen.²⁸ He then remarks that it is improbable that such a man as Avicenna could have invented the story, as was falsely suggested by Averroes.²⁹ He says that it was a matter of dispute in Florence, some arguing that this opinion is not Avicenna's and was falsely attributed to him by Averroes although Avicenna had never asserted anything of this kind. However, if those are really Avicenna's words he must have been deceived by the appearance thinking that the calf was born in the air, while it could have been elevated by a whirlwind and transported through the air to the place where Avicenna saw it fall.³⁰ Russiliano examines and refutes Averroes's arguments against Avicenna and answers to the aforementioned objections that 1. it is hardly conceivable that Averroes would falsely attribute this opinion to Avicenna given that they were almost contemporaries and their opinions were widely known; moreover, if Averroes is not trustworthy, one should consult Avicenna's *De diluviis* where the

²⁷ See ZAMBELLI, *Una reincarnazione di Pico*, p. 173–177, who regards the calf incident as a topos of the magical literature (ibid., p. 87–88: « come quel vitello che Avicenna avrebbe visto – secondo un topos di questa letteratura magica – materializzarsi nel cielo nuvoloso e poi planare di lì sulla terra »); cf. also PAOLA ZAMBELLI, *Une réincarnation de Jean Pic à l'époque de Pomponazzi: les theses magiques et hérétiques d'un aristotélicien oublié*, Tiberio Russiliano *Sesto Calabrese* (1519), Steiner, Wiesbaden 1977 (Abhandlungen der geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, 10), p. 41; see also DAG NIKOLAUS HASSE, « Avicenna's 'Giver of Forms' in Latin Philosophy, Especially in the Works of Albertus Magnus » in DAG NIKOLAUS HASSE, AMOS BERTOLACCI (eds.), *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna's Metaphysics*, De Gruyter, Berlin – New York 2012 (Scientia Graeco-Arabica, 7), p. 225–249, at 237.

²⁸ ZAMBELLI, *Une réincarnation de Jean Pic*, p. 173: « Movit praeterea Avicenna sensus ipse, cum viderit vitulum de nube cecidisse, quare rationabiliter credidit illum in aere genitum fuisse; tunc ultra si animalia perfecta possunt in aere generari, a fortiori et in terra, cum in ea meliores et perfectiores fiant continuo mixtiones quam in aere. [...] Quare generationes perfectiores fieri poterunt, quare igitur si in aere vitulus gigni potuit, cum perfectior fiat generatio in terra, poterit quoque homo ibidem generari. Praeterea experientia docet diversa vivencia in terra oriri merito terrae, rarissime in aere, qualiter, si vitulus potuit in aere generari quanto [20r] magis et in terra maior vitulo generabitur... ».

²⁹ Ibidem: « nec est conveniens aut credibile tantum virum (ut Avicenna fuit) haec fictitasse, ut falso sibi ascribit Averroes ».

³⁰ Ibid., p. 175–176: « Primo quod haec opinio non sit Avicennae, licet illud Averrois sibi falso ascribat, cum nunquam illud Avicenna asserat. Secundo dato quod sit Avicennae, Avicenna deceptus ex apparentia vituli fuit, credidit namque vitulum genitum in aerem fuisse, cum illud falsum fuerit, quia cum in vitulo terra praedominetur potuit in terra generari, potuit praeterea vitulus ex turbine in altum elevari et per aliquod spatium a ventis per aerem portari, cumque decideret Avicenna credit illum fuisse ortum in loco unde ceciderit ».

theory of spontaneous generation is held; and that 2. Avicenna made a conjecture on the probable origin of the calf he saw fall from the sky with his own eyes, but he did not see it being lifted up from the earth. In this chapter, Russiliano endorses Avicenna's views on the possibility of asexual human generation and sees the calf story as a credible corroboration of his theory.

His account contains many important points. It tells us that the calf incident was vividly debated in Florence in his time and addresses the arguments of his opponents. One of these – that the calf was in reality transported through the air by a whirlwind – will be accepted as a standard objection by later scholars. But more interesting is the link between Avicenna and Averroes that is continuously underscored by Russiliano. The juxtaposition of their names can give an impression that the calf example was perceived at least by some scholars as falsely attributed to Avicenna by Averroes, for this assertion follows immediately after the discussion of Avicenna's calf. However, it may well be that the reproach of distorting Avicenna's views refers not particularly to the calf argument, but to the theory of spontaneous generation as a whole as shows Russiliano's refutation of this view.³¹

While Andrea Cattani was pointedly neutral in his description of the calf incident, and Tiberio Russiliano was an ardent proponent of Avicenna's theory, including this story, our next author Agostino Nifo (d. 1538), a famous Averroist and commentator of Aristotle,³² takes a completely different stance. In addressing the problem of generation from semen and from putrefied matter in his *Dilucidarium* (completed in 1510), he mentions the traditional Hermetic dictum that there is nothing on the earth that does not have its star in the heaven caring for its growth, and then recounts Avicenna's theory and its criticism by Averroes, concluding that Hermes did not mean the stars to be sufficient for generation: they only facilitate it. He declares that what Avicenna tells about the calf must be a fiction (*fabula*), and even if it really took place, the calf was not capable to live as a cow and could not be animate.³³ However, in his Commentary on Aristotle's

³¹ Ibid., p. 176: « Ad quae nos respondentes facilliter diximus, ad primum, quod non est credendum tantum virum, ut Averroem, in cunctis disciplinis disertissimum, falso hanc opinionem Avicennae attribuire, praesertim cum fere contemporanei fuerint, quorum opiniones famosissime habebantur; at si Averroi nulla sit tribuenda fides, inspicitur codicillus Avicennae De diluvio, ubi passim hanc opinionem sentit, quem credimus arguentem nunquam vidisse ».

³² On him cf. CHARLES H. LOHR, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries*, vol. II: *Renaissance Authors*, Leo S. Olschki – SISMEL Edizioni del Galluzzo, Firenze 1988 (Subsidia al Corpus philosophorum Medii Aevi, 6), p. 282–287; more detailed LINDA DEER RICHARDSON, *Academic Theories of Generation in the Renaissance: The Contemporaries and Successors of Jean Fernel (1497–1558)*, Springer, Cham 2018 (History, Philosophy and Theory of the Life Sciences, 22), p. 111–122; HASSE, *Success and Suppression*, p. 206–214.

³³ AUGUSTINUS NIPHUS, *Dilucidarium philosophi solertissimi metaphysicarum disputationum in Aristotelis decem et quatuor libros metaphysicorum...*, apud Hieronymum Scotum, Venetiis 1559, p. 189: « sic

Meteorology (first ed. in 1531) he is much more restrained and retells the calf incident without reservation.³⁴

Ludovico Boccadiferro (1482–1545), another Averroist and commentator on Aristotle from Bologna,³⁵ holds the calf incident for impossible on the grounds that generation of a perfect animal in such a way would contradict Aristotle's teaching. Therefore it must be rejected that a calf could be born in a cloud, but if such accident did occur in reality, it must have had another cause. The calf could be brought up to the cloud by winds, and if animals sometimes fall from the sky, it is because of winds that get them there.³⁶ Thus, he sided with those critics mentioned by Russiliano (cf. above) who preferred to explain the incident by the power of the whirlwind. This line of argumentation was adopted by Francesco Vimercato (1512–1571)³⁷ who suggested that either Avicenna had invented the incident or he had been too credulous of a tale told by someone else. However, if he or a credible witness had seen it with their eyes, then they must have been deceived by a whirlwind that carried the calf on the air and let it fall subsequently.³⁸

The highly influential *Coimbra Commentaries* on Aristotle composed by the Jesuits and reprinted more than 100 times since their first appearance³⁹ involve the calf quotation in the same context of asexual generation of perfect animals by the celestial power alone along with other arguments such as the occurrence of

patet illud quod dixit Avicenna de vitulo, esse fabulam, cum ait ex nube cecidisse corpus vituli, illud n[on] si fuit, non erat capax vitae bovis, non potuisset esse animal ».

³⁴ ID., *Subtilissima commentaria in libros Meteorologicorum*, apud Hieronymum Scotum, Venetiis 1560, col. 412: « Aliquando ut Avicenna narravit cecidit corpus vituli, mortui tamen. Horum causas physici dixerunt esse partis sicce cum humida secundum diversas proportiones ».

³⁵ See LOHR, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries*, vol. II, p. 57–65.

³⁶ LUDOUICUS BUCCAFERREUS, *Lectiones, in secundum, ac tertium meteororum Aristotelis libros*, apud Hieronymum Scotum, Venetiis 1570, p. 49: « sic dico quod in hoc debemus recedere ab Avicenna quia haec animalia perfecta apud Aristotelem non possunt generari, nisi ex semine et ex conjunctione maris cum foemina, et hoc propter eorum perfectionem, et non possunt aliter generari, ut vult Avicenna et sic negandum est ibi fuisse genitum vitulum in nube, sed si ibi fuit ad fuit ex alia causa quia .s. ex ventis fuit ille vitulus ibi delatus, et sic si aliquando cadunt ista animalia est quia ab aliquo vento ibi fuerunt illa animalia impulsa, non quod ibi sint genita ».

³⁷ On his life and work see NEAL W. GILBERT, « Francesco Vimercato of Milan: A Bio-Bibliography », *Studies in the Renaissance*, 12 (1965), p. 188–217; LOHR, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries*, vol. II, p. 479–481; HASSE, *Success and Suppression*, p. 221–224.

³⁸ FRANCISCUS VICOMERCATUS, *In quatuor libros Aristotelis meteorologicorum commentarii*, ex off. Dominici Guerrei, Venetiis 1565, p. 130–131: « Aut igitur Avicenna, si vitulum eum cadentem non viderit, illud commentus est, aut, quoniam hoc philosopho dignum non est, aliis id nuntiantibus nimis leviter credidit, aut si ipse, vel alius fide dignus viderit, turbine aliquot vitulus ille alio in loco sublatus est, tum in terram, ubi Avicenna erat, vel alius, demissus, ut e nubibus cadere videretur ».

³⁹ See, e.g., MÁRIO S. DE CARVALHO, « The Concept of Time according to the Coimbra Commentaries », in PASQUALE PORRO (ed.), *The Medieval Concept of Time: Studies on the Scholastic Debate and Its Reception in Early Modern Philosophy*, Brill, Leiden 2001 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 75), p. 353–382, with bibliography; LOHR, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries*, vol. II, p. 98–100.

animals on the islands far off in the sea, Lusitan and Cappadocian horses conceiving from the wind, and phoenixes born from ashes and not from an egg. After a detailed discussion, the conclusion is made that the calf could not be created by the celestial influence, but was transferred by the wind or through the interference of the demons.⁴⁰ Leonardus Vairus, bishop of Pozzuoli (d. 1603), in his treatise on witchcraft *De fascino* (1583)⁴¹ in a chapter proving that nobody can « fascinate » by means of sky observation, likewise asserts that no perfect animal can be created except from semen and the female womb, and that the calf allegedly seen by Avicenna was either a dream or a tale, but even if it were seen by anyone, it must have been elevated by a whirlwind and then fallen as if from the sky.⁴²

Michael Neander (1525–1595), Rector at the German monastic school of Ilfeld, catalogues the calf among various other things known to have fallen from the skies, with reference both to Albert and Avicenna, in the manner of *mirabilia*.⁴³ Jacobus Pontanus (1542–1626), another Jesuit, in his widely popular textbook *Progymnasmata latinitatis* notes ironically:

I am very uncertain about what Albert adduces from Avicenna that the whole calf fell down once with the rain; on the same grounds I think sheep and cows can also fall therefrom. The same Avicenna had seen a 100-librae iron boulder fall from the clouds, from which then outstanding swords were made. I wonder: if a calf could be formed there, why not swords for it would save the blacksmiths' work.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis, Societatis Iesu, in quatuor libros de Coelo Aristotelis Stagiritae*, ex off. Simonis Lopesij, Olisipone 1593, p. 178: « Vitulum autem Avicennae dicimus non fuisse genitum coelesti influxu, sed aliunde magno aliquo ventorum impetu, seu Ecnephia abreptum alio in loco decidisse, aut daemonum opera, ut nonnunquam fit, delatum ». Cf. also PEDRO DE FONSECA, *Commentariorum in Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Stagiritae Libros*, t. III, Lazarus Zetzner, Coloniae 1615, p. 247: « Constat enim in insulis a continenti disiunctissimis inventa esse plurima perfecta animalia, ubi post generale diluvium, antequam in eas navigarent homines, non potuerunt illa vel enatando pervenire, vel aliter, quam ex putri materia generari. Addit Avicenna visum aliquando vitulum in nubibus genitum cum imbre decidisse ».

⁴¹ See THORNDIKE, *History of Magic*, vol. VI, p. 528–529.

⁴² LEONARDUS VAIRUS, *De fascino libri tres*, apud Nicolaum Chesneau, Parisiis 1583, p. 199: « Nec minus a ratione alienum censeo hoc, quam quod alibi Auicenna affirmat, se scilicet vitulum e fulmine cadentem uidisse. Nam quamvis animalia minus perfecta, ut ranae in aere, ex materia praeparata procreari possint, perfectum tamen non nisi ex semine in femellae utero gigni potest; quo fit ut Auicenna, aut vitulum illum cadentem somniauerit, aut aliis narrantibus nimis leuiter crediderit. Aut si ipse aut alius fide dignus viderit; turbine aliquo vitulus alio in loco sublatus fuit, deinde in terram ubi Auicenna aut alius erat, demissus, ut e nubibus cadere videretur, nam lapides et animalia in sublime subduci per turbinem possunt ».

⁴³ MICHAEL NEANDER, *Physice, sive potius syllogae physicae rerum eruditae...* Pars I, ex off. Abrahami Lambergi, Lipsiae 1591, p. 78–79: « Albertus Avicennam autorem allegat, qui referat integrum vituli corpus in pluvia e nubibus in terram decidisse ».

⁴⁴ JACOBUS PONTANUS, *Progymnasmatum latinitatis sive Dialogorum Voluminis tertii pars prior...*, Adam Sartorius, Ingolstadt 1598, p. 260: « Quod ex Avicenna Albertus adducit, aliquando vitulum integrum cum pluvia decidisse, de eo valde sum incertus, et eadem ratione oves et boves inde

Francesco Piccolomini (1523–1607), Professor at the University of Padova,⁴⁵ was even more sceptical and denied the generation in the air not only for calves, but also for frogs. To the previous scholarship he adds evidence that the whirlwind can lift even heavily laden mules up in the air.⁴⁶ Tommaso Garzoni (1549–1589), a famous Italian author, included the calf story with references to the opinions of Vimercati and Piccolomini in his encyclopaedic compendium of mirabilia *Il serraglio de gli stupori del mondo*.⁴⁷

Thus, the sixteenth century witnessed the establishment of a more and more critical view on the calf citation. The Renaissance scholars, primarily commentators of Aristotle, made wide use of Averroes's criticism to the degree of mocking Avicenna's allegedly unfortunate invention. This attitude continued for the next two centuries. That almost every scholar saw it as his duty to refute and explain away Avicenna's calf, testifies to the fact that it had become a kind of a textbook argument;⁴⁸ this contributed to its unusual longevity. The only positive evaluation from the period after Agostino Nifo that I know of comes from the Irish Franciscan theologian Bonaventure Baron. In his commentary on Aristotle's *De coelo et mundo*, while answering the question if heaven could produce animate beings, he insists that in this respect, there can be no difference between imperfect and perfect animals, and both can be formed by the influence of the stars, although stars cannot give them souls, quoting Avicenna's case as conclusive evidence.⁴⁹ But

posse delabi puto. Ille idem Avicenna conspexit massam ferri centum librarum e nubibus decidere, unde postmodum gladii praestantes fabricati sint. Miror tamen, si vitulus ibidem formari potuit, cur enses non potuerint: ut hoc labore qui fabricam ferrariam exercent liberarentur ». The iron boulder example goes back to Avicenna's *De mineralibus*, although with some deviations. On Pontanus see HERBERT JAUMANN, *Handbuch Gelehrtenkultur der Frühen Neuzeit*, vol. I: *Bio-bibliographisches Repertorium*, Berlin – New York, 2004, 530–531.

⁴⁵ LOHR, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries*, vol. II, p. 331–342.

⁴⁶ FRANCISCUS PICCOLOMINEUS, *Librorum ad scientiam de natura attinentium Pars Quarta, in qua Meteorologica explicantur*, apud Franciscum de Franciscis Senensem, Venetiis 1596, fol. 11r–v: « puto huiusmodi ranulas prius ex propriis principiis in terra fuisse genitas, et latere in rimis et cavitatibus terrae, et superveniente pluvia eis salutari, exire, et saltare, quare si Vitulus cecidit, alibi a vento fuit elevatus, ut a vehementi vento elevatos ferunt mulos, etiam salma gravatos ».

⁴⁷ TOMASO GARZONI DA BAGNACAVALLLO, *Il serraglio de gli stupori del mondo, di. Diuiso in diece appartamenti...*, appr. Ambrosio et Bartolomeo Dei, Fratelli, Venice 1613, p. 695–696.

⁴⁸ Cf. LIBERTUS FROMONDUS, *Meteorologicorum libri sex*, apud Balthasarem Moretum et viduam Ioannis Moreti et Io. Meursium, Antverpiae, 1627, p. 333: « Avicenna vitulum etiam quemdam pluvialem in Scholis nostris celebravit ». Also LEONARDUS SCHIFFERDECKER, *Disputatio meteorologica quam in alma, catholica, et electorali universitate ingolstadiensi praeside: P. Iosepho Vogler, typis Joannis Lucae Straubii, Monachii 1694*, p. 69: « Celebris est vitulus Avicennae ».

⁴⁹ BONAVENTURA BARO, *Fr. Joan. Duns Scotus Ordinis Minorum doctor subtilis, per universam philosophiam, logicam, physicam, metaphysicam, ethicam, contra adversantes defensum, quaestionum novitate amplificatus*, t. III, *Metaphysicam, ethicam, ac apologias selectas complexus*, apud Ioannem Busaeum, Coloniae Agrippinae 1664, p. 36: « Avicenna praedixit vitulum ex astris lapsurum, quod factum est, et tamen vitulus est ex perfectis animantibus ».

the overwhelming majority followed the steps of Boccadiferro and Vimercato dismissing the calf incident as the work of the wind. It will suffice just to mention some of the names and go into detail only if new information or arguments are added.

We move on to the 17th century with Daniel Sennert (1572–1637), a famous German physician,⁵⁰ and Libert Froidmont (1587–1653), Professor at Louvain, who remarks rather sarcastically: « I would be a great calf if I thought it generated in the clouds ».⁵¹ An additional argument widely used afterwards was provided by Niccolò Cabeo (1586–1650) who recalled that about 1615 in Mantua, a woman had been carried away by the whirlwind while laundering at the lake and transported a long distance through the air, but there is no mention of ‘raining a woman’ in the chronicles.⁵² Among the most prominent seventeenth-century scholars to reject Avicenna’s story were also Pierre Gassendi,⁵³ his friend and translator François Bernier,⁵⁴ Kaspar Schott (1608–1666),⁵⁵ Antoine Le Grand,⁵⁶ Gaetano Felice Verani

⁵⁰ DANIEL SENNERTUS, *Epitome scientiae naturalis*, ex off. Nicolai Ballii, Wittenberg 1618, p. 314: « Imo nonnulli ex Avicenna referent, aliquando vitulum coelo delapsum esse ». A detailed account of Sennert’s views see in HIRO HIRAI, *Medical Humanism and Natural Philosophy: Renaissance Debates on Matter, Life and the Soul*, Brill, Leiden – Boston 2011 (History of Science and Medicine Library, 26, Medieval and Early Modern Science, 17), p. 162–168.

⁵¹ FROMONDUS, *Meteorologicorum libri sex*, p. 74: « Aedificia quoque et ingentes arbores turbinibus saepe eradicantur, et animalia in sublime abripiuntur, quomodo forte olim abreptus ille vitulus, quem repluisse narrat Avicenna: nimis enim vitulus sim, si putem in nubibus generatum ».

⁵² NICOLAUS CABEUS, *In quatuor libros meteorologicorum Aristotelis commentaria et quaestiones*, t. I, typis haeredum Francisci Corbelletti, Romae 1646, p. 282: « dum enim dicitur pluisse vitulum; num quid in nubibus genitum illud animal perfectum dixeris? Apage, cur non vaccam aut bovem enixae sunt nubes? A turbine abreptus vitulus decidit, non pluit. Memini Mantuae circa annum 1615 contigisse, ut ventus vehementissimus et prodigiosus flaret. Hic turbo inter alia abripuit mulierem, lavantem pannos ad lacum et per aera asportavit procul longissime: nunquid ideo in annalibus referendum Mantuae pluisse mulierem, etiamsi longe procul asportasset ». On Cabeo see MARTIN, *Renaissance Meteorology*, p. 107–124.

⁵³ PETRUS GASSENDUS, *Opera omnia in sex tomos diuisa*, t. II, sumpt. Laurentii Anisson et Ioannis Baptistae Devenet, Lugduni 1658, p. 77: « Sed uno etiam verbo, pluisse aliquando vitulo, ut ab Avicenna scriptum memorant, nimis quam fabulosum est; nisi quod excusari solet, quatenus potuit vitulus ex uno loco, vi turbinis cujuspiam immanis abreptus, in alium transferri ac decidere; ut, si qui cadentem observaverint, existimare potuerint genitum fuisse in nubibus et ex nubibus decidisse ».

⁵⁴ FRANÇOIS BERNIER, *Abregé de la philosophie de Gassendi*, t. V, chez Anisson, Posuel et Rigaud, Lyon 1684, p. 203.

⁵⁵ GASPAR SCHOTTUS, *Physica curiosa, sive Mirabilia naturae et artis libris XII*, sumpt. Johannis Andreae Endteri et Wolffgangi Jun. haeredum, Würzburg 1662, p. 1511: « Aio itaque, Vitulum Avicennae non fuisse in nubibus generatum, sed a vento aliunde abreptum decidisse cum pluvia alicubi, indeque natam fabulam pluisse vitulo ».

⁵⁶ ANTONIUS LE GRAND, *Historia naturae, variis experimentis & ratiociniis elucidata*, apud J. Martyn, London 1673, p. 253: « Refert Avicenna vitulum aliquando pluisse, et ex alto etiam coelo cum maximo imbre decidisse. Haud arbitror Avicennam duxisse vitulum in nubibus procreatum esse, et illic materiam animalibus compingendis idoneam suppetere. Sed solum vitulum aliunde ingenti

(1647–1713), with a reference to Cabeo's woman,⁵⁷ and Juan Cano (d. 1705), the bishop of Badajoz.⁵⁸ Even the alchemists who were once eager to base their transmutation principle argumentation, among others, on the calf case (see above on Petrus Bonus), kept pace with the other sciences and now regarded it as dubious.⁵⁹ A peculiar interpretation was offered by John Wilkins in his *Discovery of a World in the Moone* (1638). While investigating the question why nothing falls from the moon, he adduces « fabulous relations of such things as have dropped thence » – *inter alia*, the calf episode, which he renders in a very curious way saying: « Thus Avicenna relates the story of a Calfe which fell downe in a storme, the beholders thinking it a Moone-calfe, and that it fell thence ». ⁶⁰ No one has previously or subsequently associated Avicenna's calf with the moon, nor is there any mention of other beholders, so that Wilkins appears to have adjusted the motif to his own ends.

During the 18th century, the interest in Avicenna's calf begins to fade remarkably. It ceases to be mentioned by the top scientists and recurs only sporadically in the works of others – e.g. Giacinto Gimma (1668–1735), a canon at the Bari cathedral and encyclopaedist, who addressed this issue more than once,⁶¹

turbine esse abreptum, et cum pluvia in distantem aliquem locum delatum. Quis nescit fluxam coeli substantiam hujusmodi efformandis corporibus esse ineptam? quomodo tanta moles in nubibus sustineretur, et ante completam generationem non dilaberetur? An quia Avicenna quondam vitulo pluisse scripsit, compactus in nubibus vitulus est? Sed illi credant, qui auctoritati potius quam rationi patrocinantur, et qui omnia promiscue admittunt, quae ab antiquis Authoribus aut narrata sunt, aut somniata ».

⁵⁷ GAETANO FELICE VERANI, *Philosophia Universa Speculativa Peripatetica*, t. III, sumpt. ac typis Joannis Jaecklini, Monachii 1686, p. 706.

⁵⁸ IOANNES CANO, *Tomus quartus Cursus philosophici: In quo quatuor libri Aristotelis De coelo et mundo exponuntur et exornantur*, Gregorii Ortiz Gallardo, Salamanticae 1693, p. 205.

⁵⁹ JOHANNES FREYTAG, *Kurtzer Bericht von der Melancholia hypochondriaca [...] Darbey deß Wundersteins der Weißheit und Reichthums nicht vergessen wird*, bey Caspar Röteln, Frankfurt am Main 1644, p. 407: « Was der Avicenna schreibt von einem Kalb welches in den Wolcken worden unnd noch halb lebendig hinab mit dem Regen gefallen, das lassen wir an seinen Ort gestellet seyn, weil er und der Plinius bißweilen die Axt gar zu weit werffen ». This passage was *verbatim* reproduced by JOHANN MICHAEL FAUSTIUS, *Compendium alchymisticum novum sive Pandora explicata*, Verlegts Johann Zieger, Leipzig 1706, p. 444.

⁶⁰ JOHN WILKINS, *The Discovery of a World in the Moone, or A Discourse Tending to Prove that 'tis probable there may be another habitable World in that Planet*, printed by E. G. for Michael Sparke and Edward Forrest, London 1638, p. 113.

⁶¹ HYACINTHUS GIMMA, *Dissertationum academicarum tomus primus: I. De hominibus fabulosis; II. De fabulosis animalibus, in qua legitur De fabulosa generatione viventium*, ex typ. Michaelis Aloysii Mutio, Neapoli 1714, p. 189, citing Vimercati; ID., *Della storia naturale delle gemme, delle pietre, e di tutti i minerali, ovvero della Fisica sotterranea*, vol. II, nella stamperia di Gennaro Muzio, Napoli 1730, p. 521: « Ridicola e la relazione di Avicenna in lib. De diluvio, che qualche volta un Vitello generato tra le Nuvole sia caduto colla pioggia; e così dicono ancora di altri animali ».

Leopold Gramiller (1665–1722), a Catholic preacher and author;⁶² and Giuseppe Antonio Ferrari da Monza (d. 1776), a Franciscan author, whose arguments are also derivative.⁶³

The references found in citations and recounts adduced above may vary, but they focus on the three names: Albert the Great, Avicenna and Averroes. It is, however, obvious that they all ultimately go back to the passage from Albert with which we have started the present study. It is therefore reasonable to examine the citation and its interrelation with other important themes and motifs in Albert's writings and to attempt to detect if his attribution to Avicenna can be corroborated.

III. *Albert the Great*

The *Meteora* of Albert the Great, written between 1250 and 1254,⁶⁴ is an elaborate and extensive commentary on the *Meteorology* of Aristotle. But what he commented on was actually a text quite different from Aristotle's original. He used the Latin translation made by Gerard of Cremona (1114–1187) from the Arabic translation by Yaḥyā ibn al-Bīṭrīq (c. 800). However, Gerard accomplished the translation of only the first three books of the *Meteorology*; the fourth book had been translated earlier from Greek by the Sicilian Henricus Aristippus (d. 1162).⁶⁵

⁶² LEOPOLD GRAMILLER, *Ariadne Evangelica, Oder Christliche Weegweiserin*, in Verlag Georg Schlüter und Martin Happach, Augsburg 1724, p. 502: « Es widersprechen aber diese Maynung des Avicennae alle vernünfftige Welt-Weise, und mit denenselben alle Theologi, oder Gottes-Gelehrte, einhellig behauptende, daß aus einer faulen Materi vermittelst der Sonnen Einflußes allein die unvollkommene Thier, als da seynd die Frösche, die Mäuse und andere dergleichen, keines Weegs aber die vollkommene Thiere, wie ich schon angezogen und gemeldet hab, produciret und gezeuget werden können ».

⁶³ JOSEPHI ANTONII FERRARI DE MODOETIA, *Philosophia peripatetica Adversus Veteres, et Recentiores Praesertim philosophos firmioribus, propugnata rationibus Ioannis Dunsii Scoti*, editio secunda, t. III, apud Thomam Bettinelli, Venetiis 1754, p. 127: « Verum quamplurima ex his fabulosa esse, nemo non videt. Ut cum dicitur vitulum pluisse. Hoc enim commentitium prorsus, ac ridiculum est; nisi quod excusari solet Avicennas, quatenas potuit vitulus ex uno loco, vi turbinis cujuspiam immanis abreptus, in alium transferri, ac decidere, ut qui cadentem observarunt, existimare potuerint genitum fuisse in nubibus, et e nubibus decidisse ».

⁶⁴ See the time-table in JAMES A. WEISHEIPL, « Albert's Works on Natural Sciences (*libri naturales*) in Probable Chronological Order », in Id. (ed.), *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences: Commemorative Essays 1980*, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto 1980 (Studies and Texts of the Pontifical Institute, 49), p. 565–577.

⁶⁵ On Aristippus' translation see LUIGI MINIO-PALLUELO, « Henri Aristippe, Guillaume de Moerbeke et les traductions latines médiévales des *Météorologiques* et du *De generatione et corruptione* d'Aristote », *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, 45 (1947), p. 206–235; CARLOS STEEL, « A Philological Diet for Philosophers: Aristippus' Translation of Book IV of Aristoteles' *Meteorology* and Albert the Great », in ALESSANDRO PALAZZO (ed.), *L'Antichità classica nel pensiero medievale: Atti del convegno della Società Italiana per lo Studio del Pensiero Medievale (SISPM), Trento, 27–29 settembre 2010*, Brepols, Turnhout 2011 (Textes et études du Moyen Age, 6), p. 79–106.

Alfred of Sareshel was very likely the man who added this fourth book in Aristippus's translation to the three books translated by Gerard and supplemented them with his own translation of a couple of chapters on minerals from Avicenna's *Kitāb al-shifā'* which is generally known under the title *De mineralibus* or *De congelatione et conglutinatione lapidum*.⁶⁶ The work which, as we see, is a heterogenous compilation was transmitted as a whole and often indiscriminately attributed to Aristotle. This was the only text of the *Meteorology* available in the West until the appearance of a new translation by William of Moerbeke who translated the Greek original and cut out the additional chapters during Albert's lifetime, but only after Albert had composed his commentary. However, the dubious authenticity of the *De congelatione et conglutinatione lapidum* was being increasingly recognized by the scholars already in 13th century.⁶⁷ Albert had been well aware of Avicenna's authorship before the new translation of the *Meteorology* came into circulation as can be most clearly seen from Albert's *De mineralibus* I, I, 2 where he cites and paraphrases *De congelatione and conglutinatione* properly referring to Avicenna.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ See CHARLES BURNETT, « The Coherence of the Arabic-Latin Translation Program in Toledo in the Twelfth Century », *Science in Context*, 14 (2001), p. 249–288, at 261; ID., « Arabic into Latin: The Reception of Arabic Philosophy into Western Europe », in PETER ADAMSON, RICHARD C. TAYLOR (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2005, p. 370–404, at 374 and fn. 13 at p. 388; STEEL, « A Philological Diet for Philosophers », p. 88–89; JEAN-MARC MANDOSIO, « Follower or Opponent of Aristotle? The Critical Reception of Avicenna's *Meteorology* in the Latin World and the Legacy of Alfred the Englishman », in DAG NIKOLAUS HASSE, AMOS BERTOLACCI (eds.), *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna's Physics and Cosmology*, De Gruyter, Berlin – New York 2018 (*Scientia Graeco-Arabica*, 23), p. 459–534; on compilation see also GUDRUN VUILLEMIN-DIEM (ed.), *Meteorologica. Translatio Guillelmi de Morbeka*, 2 vols., Brepols, Turnhout 2008 (*Aristoteles Latinus*, 10 2.1), p. 5–9; for the edition of Gerard's translation see PIETER L. SCHOONHEIM, *Aristotle's Meteorology in the Arabico-Latin Tradition: A Critical Edition of the Texts, with Introduction and Indices*, Brill, Leiden – Köln 2000 (*Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus*, 12).

⁶⁷ See VUILLEMIN-DIEM (ed.), *Meteorologica* (*Aristoteles Latinus*, 10 2.1): *Praefatio*, p. 9, fn. 27; on the later reception cf. also MARTIN CRAIG, « Scientific Terminology and the Effects of Humanism: Renaissance Translations of *Meteorologica* IV and the Commentary Tradition », in MICHÈLE GOYENS, PIETER DE LEEMANS, AN SMETS (eds.), *Science Translated: Latin and Vernacular Translations of Scientific Treatises in Medieval Europe*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2008 (*Mediaevalia Lovaniensia. Series 1. Studia*, 40), p. 155–180, at 162–164.

⁶⁸ ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Book of minerals*, trans. DOROTHY WYCKOFF, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1967, p. 13: « Avicenna testifies to this when he says that pure Earth does not become stone, since on account of its dryness Earth does not produce coherence, but rather a tendency to break into little pieces; for the dryness predominating in it prevents it from sticking together. The same philosopher explains that sometimes clay is dried out and becomes something intermediate between stone and clay, and then after a while it becomes stone. And again he says that the clay most suitable for transmuting into stone is unctuous, and the reason why that kind does not break into little pieces or crumble into dust is that its moisture is not easily separable from it ». See also *ibid.*, 284. For the Latin text see *Opera omnia*, ed. BORNET, vol. V.

The calf episode appears in the section on thunder and lightning, both of which Albert has quite much to say about, dedicating the whole 3rd treatise of the 3rd book to them. Albert thoroughly analyses the topics absent from or unsatisfactorily covered in Gerard's translation⁶⁹ in many digressions, one of which contains the calf example. This example is to be found neither in the original text of Aristotle, nor in its Arabic translation by Yaḥyā ibn al-Biṭrīq, nor in the translation by Gerard, nor, to provide a full picture, in the later translation by William of Moerbeke. As we have seen, this digression deals with the question of what exactly strikes from the cloud, and the fall of the calf exemplifies that not only minerals, but also perfect animals can be formed from the vapor on high. One may get the impression, though, that the example, however fitting here into his line of argument, is somehow misplaced since one of the motifs it incorporates is a well known theory of spontaneous generation which Albert directly addresses quite often.

For example, in the same *Meteora* (II, 1, 21) he explains that many aquatic animals such as frogs, little fishes and worms can be generated with the rain because when the heat which is in the cloud starts evaporating, it draws outside subtle and humid matter which is well mixed with the subtle earthly matter and therefore becomes viscous. But when this viscosity is exposed to the air, it starts thickening and stiffens into skin. The heat pulsating continuously inside causes breathing, and the sensitive soul is added to it due to the influence of the stars. Thus an animal is brought to life. However, so are generated mostly aquatic animals, since water prevails in such a rain.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Tr. II, sermo 9 = p. 110–116 of Schoonheim's edition.

⁷⁰ « Quia pluvia fit de vapore multum habente de terrestri, ideo, cum suavis est, aliquando cum pluvia generantur multa animalia aquatica, sicut ranunculi et pisces parvuli et vermes. Cujus causa est, quia calidum, quod est in nube, cum evaporare incipit, trahit secum humidum subtile, quod in se habet aliquid de subtili terreo bene commixto; et ideo est viscosum. Cum autem viscosum ducitur ad aerem, incipit durescere et in pellem constare. In qua continue pulsans calidum, efficit spiritum. Cui additur anima sensibilis virtute stellarum. Et tunc fit animal. Fiunt autem hec ut plurimum aquatica, quia in tali pluvia vincit aqua ». On this passage see also SMOLLER, « Of Earthquakes, Hail, Frogs, and Geography », p. 179. For a very similar description see his *De animalibus* VI, 3, 3 (ed. HERMANN STADLER, Aschendorff, Münster 1916–1920, p. 494–495). Cf. discussion of the theory of spontaneous generation in the writings of Albert in VAN DER LUGT, *Le ver, le démon et la vierge*, p. 140–143 and 170–176; DAG NIKOLAUS HASSE, « Spontaneous Generation and the Ontology of Forms in Greek, Arabic, and Medieval Latin Sources », in PETER ADAMSON (ed.), *Classical Arabic Philosophy: Sources and Reception*, The Warburg Institute and Aragnò, London – Turin 2007 (Warburg Institute Colloquia, 11), p. 150–175, p. 164. On spontaneous generation in Islamic sources see REMKE KRUK, « A Frothy Bubble: Spontaneous Generation in the Medieval Islamic Tradition », *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 35/2 (1990), p. 265–282; cf. also PAOLA ZAMBELLI, « 'The Earth was like a Sponge and Men Lived within it': Ideas on Spontaneous Generation of Man among Islamic and Latin Thinkers », in EAD., *Astrology and Magic from the Medieval Latin and Islamic World to Renaissance Europe: Theories and Approaches*, Ashgate, Farnham 2012 (Variorum Collected Studies Series, 997).

Albert never mentions the calf episode anywhere else in his works, neither in relation to spontaneous generation nor in any other context.⁷¹ Nevertheless, the wording of the passage which mentions the formation of an animal body by the means of the formative power of the stars strongly suggests its direct connection with the other discussions of spontaneous generation found in Albert's writings. What is most interesting about the calf example is that it seems to contradict Albert's own views that perfect animals cannot be generated solely by the influence of the stars, which are most explicitly expressed in *De causis propr.* I, 2, 13:

In the same way, however, it seems that one ought to agree that stars have the power to produce animals that are not too dissimilar, such as mice and bats, and any others of this sort that exist in kinds of animals. For although [animals] like these have instruments of motion, like wings and legs, they nonetheless have short and not very different ones. But for the reproduction of perfect animals, like the lion and the ox and the human, they seem to suffice in no way.⁷²

The context of the calf passage implies that Albert regards the example demonstrating the possibility of the formation of a perfect animal as a valid argument; in fact, when he says that « the bodies of perfect animals are rarely formed in the cloud » the word *raro* itself signals that it is not impossible. However, it is also of importance that Albert twice emphasizes that the calf was dead. It should be interpreted perhaps as an indication that the generation was not really completed, that is, the power of the stars was sufficient for forming the body, but not for animating it.⁷³

⁷¹ He discusses spontaneous generation in general or with regard to specific animals such as mice and worms in many works written both before and after the *Meteora* – cf. *Summa de creaturis* IV, 72, 2 (*Opera omnia*, ed. BORGNET, vol. XXXIV, p. 745–6); *Physica* VIII, 2, 10 (*Opera omnia*, ed. Coloniensis, vol. IV/2, p. 613); *De XV problematibus*, ch. VI (ed. GEYER, p. 38); *De causis propr.* II, 13 (*Opera omnia*, ed. Coloniensis, vol. V/2, p. 86); *De animalibus* VI, 3, 3 (ed. STADLER, p. 494–495); XVII, 2, 1 (on generation of worms, p. 1170); XXII, 2, 1.80 (on generation of mice, p. 1415).

⁷² ALBERT THE GREAT, *On the Causes of the Properties of the Elements (Liber de causis proprietatum elementorum)*, trans. IRVEN M. RESNICK, Marquette University Press, Milwaukee 2010 (Mediaeval Philosophical Texts in Translation, 46), p. 93. Cf. ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Opera omnia*, ed. Coloniensis, vol. V/2, p. 86: « Similiter autem consentiendum videtur stellas posse ad productionem animalium non multum dissimilium, sicut sunt mures et vespertiliones, et quidquid huiusmodi est in animalium generibus; licet enim huiusmodi instrumenta habeant motus sicut alas et crura, tamen brevia habent et non multum differentia. Sed in perfectorum animalium generatione, sicut est leo et bos et homo, nulla videntur sufficere ratione ».

⁷³ Cf. indications of short duration of monsters in his *De causis propr.* I, 2, 13: « But Averroes says that what is said about the stars is true in similar animals and he says that it is not true in dissimilar animals, because if by chance a shape is impressed by a star on some body or animal, it does not develop the strength for life, but is dead. For stones are found shaped in a human likeness and likewise monsters, which do not develop a strength for life, which nonetheless must arise from

On the other hand, it brings us to another recognizable and recurring motif – that of an animal falling from a height and dead before it reaches the ground. The cause of death is not the impact, but the dominance of the pure element of air in the upper region which a living animal cannot endure. This idea is borrowed from *De causis* of Pseudo-Aristotle which reads as follows:

And likewise when one of the four elements prevails in an animal, it kills him. And when he is deprived of one of them, he does not abide. This is because if an animal is deprived of air, he does not endure. Likewise, when air prevails in him, it kills him, as, for example, that one who falls from a very high place, for he dies before he attains the earth.⁷⁴

Albert explicitly referred to this work while introducing this view in his *De natura loci*⁷⁵ and repeated it with more details and arguments in *De causis et proprietatibus elementorum*:

In the same manner, if simple air that is not somewhat dense occupied an animal, it would die, and an indication of this is that we see that those animals that fall from a very high place, where the air is pure, seem to die not from the fall but rather before they reach the ground. But the experiential evidence [experimentum] for this is twofold: there is of course one example that is observed in the art of climbing, for if one falling from a high place is deflected from the line of his fall, he will impact the ground only as hard as if he fell from the place where he received the deflection. For if someone should fall from a tower and someone else should intercept him three cubits before he falls to earth and should push him away with a hand transversely from the line of his fall from the tower, the one falling will impact the ground only as hard as he would have from a fall of three cubits. However, if he

the power of the stars » (trans. RESNICK, p. 93–94). For the Latin text see *Opera omnia*, ed. Coloniensis, vol. V/2, p. 86–87: « Quod autem de stellis dicitur, verum esse dicit Averroes in animalibus similibus, et in animalibus dissimilibus non dicit esse verum, quod si figura forte imprimatur a stella alicui corpori vel animali, illud non convalescit ad vitam, sed est mortuum; lapides enim figurati effigie hominis inveniuntur et similiter monstra, quae non convalescunt, quod tamen virtute stellarum fieri est necesse ». On this passage see also VAN DER LUGT, *Le ver, le démon et la vierge*, p. 175–176.

⁷⁴ STANLEY LUIS VODRASKA, *Pseudo-Aristotle: De causis proprietatum et elementorum: Critical Edition and Study*, Ph.D. Diss. masch., University of London 1969, p. 91–92: « Et similiter quando occupat unum istorum elementorum quattuor aliquod animalium, interficit ipsum. Et quando privatur uno eorum, non est remanentia ei. Quod est quia si aliquod animalium privatur aere, non est ei permanentia. Et similiter quando occupat ipsum aer, interficit ipsum, sicut illud quod ruit ex loco altissimo superiori, moritur enim antequam perveniat ad terram ».

⁷⁵ ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De natura loci* I, 2, in *Opera omnia*, ed. Coloniensis, vol. V/2, p. 3: « Propter quod egregie dicit Aristoteles in Libro de causis proprietatum elementorum et orbis sive planetarum, quod si compositum occupatur a simplici, corrumpitur statim, dans exemplum de his animalibus, quae cadunt ab altissimo, quae ante mortua sunt, quam ad terram deveniant, et ideo corrupta sunt, eo quod occupata sunt ab aere simplici et non a casu ».

should fall from a very high place and be deflected from the line of the fall, he is still found dead. And for this reason it is known that he did not die from the fall but because he has been filled with simple air.⁷⁶

Albert himself does not clarify as to how we should understand the indication that the calf was dead – as an evidence that the power of the stars could only form the body in the clouds, but not vivify it or that it was animated, but died being exposed to the pure element of air.

Thus, the calf example could well be used in the context of two very important motifs which Albert discusses many times at various places before and after composition of the *Meteora* – that of spontaneous generation and that of an [animated] body falling from the sky. The closest parallels are found in his treatise *De causis proprietatum elementorum* written before the *Meteora*. However, the calf example occurs only once in the section of the *Meteora* related to thunder and the substance which strikes from a cloud.

IV. Avicenna

The « explicit nominal » reference, as labelled by Amos Bertolacci,⁷⁷ to Avicenna incorporated into the calf story suggests, however, that Albert may have cited from some source, and at least for this reason we must consider Avicenna's writings that were available to Albert in order to verify if the calf episode occurs in any of them. The Latin translations accomplished before Albert's *Meteora* included two great works of Avicenna – the medicine encyclopaedia *Canon of Medicine* (*Qanūn fī l-ṭibb*) translated by Gerard of Cremona in the second half of the

⁷⁶ ALBERT THE GREAT, *On the Causes of the Properties of the Elements*, trans. RESNICK, p. 26. For the Latin text see *De causis proprietatum* I, I, 2, in *Opera omnia*, ed. Coloniensis, vol. V/2, p. 53: « Similiter, si aliquod animalium aer simplex occuparet, qui non esset crassus aliquantulum, moreretur, et huius signum est, quia videmus, quod ea quae cadunt ab altissimo, ubi purus est aer, videntur mortua non ex casu, sed potius antequam perveniant ad terram. Experimentum autem huius est duplex: unum quidem, quod observatur in arte scandendi, quoniam si cadens ab alto extrudatur a linea casus, non colliditur nisi tantum, quantum potest collidi ex loco, in quo recipit extrusionem; si enim aliquis a turri cadat et ei alius obviet per tres cubitos, antequam ad terram descendat, et eum manu ex linea casus a turri ex transverso eiciat, non colliditur cadens, nisi quantum potuit collidi ex casu trium cubitorum; si autem ab altissimo cadat et extrudatur a linea casus, tamen invenitur mortuus; et ideo constat, quod non ex casu mortuus est, sed quia a simplici aere fuerat occupatus. Aliud est experimentum, quod cadavera eorum inveniuntur cum signis mortis non ex collisione, quia forte ex casu non tumescunt vel non sanguinant neque cetera signa habent collisionis umorum. Hac de causa etiam in montes altissimos ascendentes spongas aquis intinctas ante nares secum portaverunt, ut per has spiratus crassior esset aer ».

⁷⁷ AMOS BERTOLACCI, « The Reception of Avicenna in Latin Medieval Culture », in PETER ADAMSON (ed.), *Interpreting Avicenna: Critical Essays*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2013, p. 242–269, at 254, where he distinguishes between this type of reference which explicitly names Avicenna, against « explicit indeterminate » quotation which involves « an indefinite description ».

12th century, and some parts of his compendium *Book of the Cure* (*Kitāb al-Shifā'*), executed at various times by various translators: that is, the Introduction and the Prologue, logical treatises, *Liber primus naturalium*, *De anima*, *De animalibus*, and the already mentioned *De mineralibus* and *De diluviis*.⁷⁸ Many other treatises such as *De caelo*, *De generatione et corruptione*, *De Actionibus et Passionibus Qualitatum Primarum*, and *De plantis* were made accessible to the Western audience later and could not have been consulted by Albert during his work on the *Meteora*.

Since the calf story appears in Albert's *Meteora*, it is reasonable to start with the Latin treatises derived from Avicenna's *Meteorology*.⁷⁹ This part of *Kitāb al-Shifā'* was translated in its entirety by Johannes Gunsalvini and Salomon in Burgos after Albert's *Meteora* had already been composed, but in Albert's times translations of two fragments were known – a treatise *De mineralibus* or *De congelatione et conglutinatione lapidum* which we have mentioned above in connection with the translations of Aristotle's *Meteorology*, and a short treatise *De diluviis*.⁸⁰ In *De mineralibus*, Avicenna addresses the formation of stones and mountains, offers a four-fold classification of minerals and expresses his sceptical view on the possibility of a real alchemical transmutation. He illustrates his arguments with numerous examples, the most interesting of which for the present study are those relating to meteorites. Thus, he conveys that thunderbolts fell with the lightning in several places, e.g. in Persia, and that they could not be liquefied, but turned into ashes. A heavy lump of iron fell once from the sky; it could hardly be crushed, and a part of it was brought to a king who ordered to make swords from it, but it was not malleable; it consisted of small particles coalescing with each other like big millet grains; and it is said that some of the best swords are made from similar matter. Another such mass fell somewhere else. The Latin translation, distorted and abridged as it is, preserves these examples.

⁷⁸ See Ibid., 244–249.

⁷⁹ On the Latin translations of this part see JEAN-MARC MANDOSIO, CARLA DI MARTINO, « La *Météorologie* d'Avicenne (*Kitāb al-Shifā'* V) et sa diffusion dans le monde latin », in ANDREAS SPEER, LYDIA WEGENER (eds.), *Wissen über Grenzen: Arabisches Wissen und lateinisches Mittelalter*, De Gruyter, Berlin – New York, 2006 (*Miscellanea Mediaevalia*, 33), p. 406–424, and SILVIA DI DONATO, « Les trois traductions latines de la *Météorologie* d'Avicenne: notes pour l'histoire du texte », *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 28 (2017), p. 331–349.

⁸⁰ *De mineralibus* was translated by Alfred of Shareshill. The previous editions are now superseded by ELISA RUBINO, SAMUELA PAGANI, « Il *De mineralibus* di Avicenna tradotto da Alfredo di Shareshill », *Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale*, 58 (2016), p. 23–87. For the *De diluviis* text see still MANUEL ALONSO ALONSO, « Homenaje a Avicena en su milenarios: Las traducciones de Juan González de Burgos y Salomón », *Al-Andalus*, 14/2 (1949), p. 291–319. There are good reasons to assume that *De diluviis* was translated by Michael Scot, see HASSE, ANDREAS BÜTTNER, « Notes on Anonymous Twelfth-Century Translations of Philosophical Texts from Arabic into Latin on the Iberian Peninsula », in HASSE, BERTOLACCI (eds.), *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception*, p. 313–369, at 346–347.

Albert abundantly refers to and cites from Avicenna's *De mineralibus* in various treatises – for the most part in his work of the same title,⁸¹ but also in the *Meteora*. It is remarkable that in his *De mineralibus* Albert explicitly mentions only one example from Avicenna: while arguing that stones can be produced by river banks, he illustrates this point by referring to the river Gion where it takes thirty three years for stones to be formed.⁸² The second case is not an example in the strict sense, but rather a partial retelling or allusion to some details in Avicenna's account. In the same chapter of the *Meteora* which contains the calf episode, just before and after it, Albert tells that if a mineral falls from the cloud it is mostly of iron and that an iron mass falling from the cloud is distilled from inside the cloud in the form of drops and for this reason is composed as if of millet grains.⁸³ After the calf story, he adds that the minerals that fall [from the clouds] are so dried out that they cannot be liquefied and are not fabricable, but when put into fire, evaporate into ashes.⁸⁴ These allusions evidently go back to Avicenna's text, but are detached from his examples, which makes them look like theoretical generalizations. There is nothing, however, either in the original text of Avicenna or in its Latin translation that resembles the story of a dead calf body falling from the sky. Nevertheless, it is very interesting that the generalized conclusions extracted from Avicenna's examples without references to the author frame the calf story which is attributed to Avicenna.

Another fragment of the *Meteorology* from *Kitāb al-Shifā'* was translated into Latin before the mid-thirteenth century by an anonymous translator and known under the title *De diluviis*. Though very short, even tiny, it was one of the most important works on spontaneous generation which was commented on and polemized with throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance as we have seen in the first part of this article. Here Avicenna, referring to Plato's *Timaeus*, enunciates his theory on the floods which can be caused by the redundancy not only of water, but also of the other three elements. The crucial factor is a specific alignment of stars. After the extinction of life forms due to such floods they can be re-created not through reproduction (*gignitio*), but through generation (*generatio*), just as snakes come from the hair, scorpions from the figs, mice from the earth and frogs from the rain. It is not impossible, therefore, that all composite beings could be brought forth through the composition of the elements and not through

⁸¹ ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De mineralibus* I, 1, 1; I, 1, 7; I, 2, 8; III, 1, 6; III, 1, 9; IV, 2; IV, 3; V, 1, in *Opera omnia*, ed. BORNET, vol. V. Cf. corresponding places in English translation by DOROTHY WYCKOFF (ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Book of minerals*).

⁸² *De min.* I, 1, 7, borrowed from Avicenna's *De min.*, ed. RUBINO – PAGANI, p. 35.

⁸³ ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Meteora*, in *Opera omnia*, ed. Coloniensis, VI/1, p. 171: « Et quia cum congelatur frigidus, congelatur in interioribus nubis et per modum guttarum distillat ab interiori vapore, ideo est massa sicut ex granulis milii et ceteris composita ».

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 172: « Mineralia autem, quae cadunt, adeo sunt exsiccata, quod nec liquescunt, nec fabricabilia sunt; sed cum in ignem ponuntur, evaporant in cineres ».

reproduction. Astronomers argue that if some alignments of the stars had not produced individuals of the species, these species could cease to exist without renewal. And a man does not necessarily come into being through another man.

This text shares many common points with the calf story which could indeed serve as a perfect illustration to the theory of spontaneous formation of « higher » animals under the influence of the stars. Nevertheless, it is not to be found in the treatise. It is important to note here that Albert was very well aware of Avicenna's authorship of the *De diluviis*. He mentions it with the reference to Avicenna in the *Summa de creaturis*⁸⁵ and gives a very detailed survey in the *De causis propr.* I, 2, 13, which I have already touched upon above.⁸⁶ Thus, it can be stated that the two fragments of Avicenna's *Meteorology* undoubtedly known to Albert and many times cited and discussed in his own treatises do not contain anything similar to the calf example, although they demonstrate a considerable degree of overlapping of some general ideas and notions.

Avicenna devotes considerable space to spontaneous generation in his *De animalibus* translated into Latin by Michael Scot before 1236.⁸⁷ He relates of bombyxes that appeared in a great multitude in a town after the rain, of scorpions which his friend « made » so that they produced other scorpions after that, of a beaver found in a stream that came into existence recently and was far away from the sea, of fishes that occur in recently dug ditches, but nothing of a calf.⁸⁸

Searching through the other texts by Avicenna available to Albert in Latin translations brought also no results. Moreover, it seems that the whole corpus of Avicenna's writings does not include a story of the calf falling from the sky in any form, or at least I was unable to find any evidence. It could also be surmised that the example occurs not in Avicenna, but in some commentaries which could have been confused with the main text, e.g., in the commentaries of Alfred of Shareshill, especially since there are reasons to assume that Albert was acquainted with these glosses.⁸⁹ However, the result is likewise negative.

⁸⁵ ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Summa de creaturis* tr. IV, q. 72, art. 2, in *Opera omnia*, ed. BORNET, vol. XXXIV, p. 745–746.

⁸⁶ Cf. DI DONATO, « Les trois traductions latines », p. 337; the statement in MANDOSIO, DI MARTINO, « La Météorologie d'Avicenne », p. 420, that the Latin translation should have been made before 1250–1254 « puisque Albert le Grand la cite à diverses reprises dans son 'De mineralibus', sans savoir qu'il s'agit d'un texte d'Avicenne » is inaccurate since *De causis propr.* was written before the *De mineralibus*, and there is no doubt that Albert properly recounts there the doctrine of Avicenna as expounded in the *De diluviis* with a due reference to Avicenna.

⁸⁷ Cf. BERTOLACCI, « The reception of Avicenna », p. 246–247.

⁸⁸ See AVICENNA, *De animalibus per magistrum Michaellem Scotum de arabico in latinum translatus*, Venetiis [c. 1500], fol. 47v. Albert retells some of these examples in his *De animalibus* XV, 1, 8 (ed. STADLER, p. 1009).

⁸⁹ ELISA RUBINO, « The Commentary of Alfred of Shareshill on the Pseudo-Aristotelian *De mineralibus* », *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 28 (2017), p. 351–364, at 354.

Finally, one must take into account pseudo-Avicennian writings, such as *De caelo et mundo*⁹⁰ and alchemical treatises *Ad Hasen Regem Epistula* and *De Anima in arte alchemiae*, which Albert often refers to in his works. However, although these texts sometimes discuss issues which are very close to the bundle of motifs behind the calf example – for instance, the possibility of formation of living beings from non-living entities and, actually, the very possibility of transmutation – they do not mention the fall of the calf.⁹¹ Thus, so far I have not been able to find any evidence of the motif in the works written by or associated with Avicenna.

V. Averroes

We have seen that some humanists who obviously could not find the source of the citation in the works by Avicenna suggested that it was Averroes who might have been responsible for this confusion. This opinion was in a way accepted in the latest edition of Albert's *Meteora* since the passage on the calf is provided with a reference « cf. Averroes, *Meteora* 1.2 c.4 (f.45D) ». In this commentary, Averroes considers the problem of thunder and lightning (*De tonitruis, fulminibus et fulguribus*) – a very close parallel to Albert the Great's discussion of the same topics where the calf story appears.⁹² Here, Averroes argues at length that lightning and thunder have the same cause in violent winds which, in case of the lightning, get inflamed through their own velocity. He mentions Avicenna only to retell his account of the stones he had found in the lands of Casaam and Turch, but then, in the Latin translation, he adds that such things were never seen in « our lands » and nobody of the Peripatetics remembered it, but according to Avicenna a big stone fell once in Cordoba, fiery on a serene and clear day and that Avicenna saw it with his own eyes, and it had a sulphurous smell and was quasi of the nature of ammoniacum, and it was not far away.⁹³ This addition looks very suspicious since

⁹⁰ See PSEUDO-AVICENNA, *Liber celi et mundi: A Critical Edition with Introduction*, ed. OLIVER GUTMAN, Brill, Leiden 2003 (Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus, 14); Albert used the *Liber Celi et Mundi* in his work and attributed it to Avicenna, see OLIVER GUTMAN, « On the Fringes of the *Corpus Aristotelicum*: The Pseudo-Avicenna *Liber Celi et Mundi* », *Early Science and Medicine*, 2/2: *Medieval Cosmologies*, p. 109–128, at 113.

⁹¹ Calf or cow do occur in the occult or alchemical texts, but mostly in another function – as material for bees, see, for example, LIANA SAIF, « The Cows and the Bees: Arabic Sources and Parallels for Pseudo-Plato's *Liber Vaccae* (Kitāb al-Nawāmīs) », *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 79 (2016), p. 1–47.

⁹² I have used the edition *Aristotelis Stagiritae Omnia, Quae Extant, Opera: Aristotelis Opera cum Averrois commentariis*, vol. V: *Aristotelis De coelo, De generatione et corruptione, Meteorologicorum, De plantis cum Averrois Cordubensis variis in eosdem commentariis*, apud Junctas, Venetiis 1562, fol. 446r–447r.

⁹³ Ibid.: « Et narravit Auicenna quod aduenit ex terrestreitate huius exhalationis in terris Casaam, et in terris Turch, quod inuenitur in locis, in quibus cadunt ista fulmina, corpora similia ferro, et airi: et quod ipse laboravit liquefacere ipsum, seu accendere illud, et non potuit: sed dissoluebatur, et conuertebatur in ignem, donec priuatum fuit. et haec res non fuit visa in terris

in the treatise Averroes obviously refers to, Avicenna does not record anything similar or corresponding in details to Averroes's description – he does not mention either the sulphurous smell of any meteor, or its fiery appearance in the clear sky, and of course he had never been to Cordoba so that he could not possibly have described the event as an eyewitness. The dubiety of the passage was noted by Manuel Alonso Alonso who suggested a distortion in the Latin text or scribal errors in the names of Cordoba or Avicenna.⁹⁴ Indeed, the Arabic original of the *Epitome* refers for the story of the Cordoban stone not to Avicenna, but to the Cordoban historian Ibn Ḥayyān (d. 1076) so that it is an obvious error of the Latin translation.⁹⁵ It is interesting that Averroes's criticism of Avicenna in his *Epitome* is quite calm in tone and actually oblique, in contrast to his harsh attacks elsewhere.⁹⁶ However, we find no calf in this passage of Averroes.

Perhaps, we should consider another passage from the same Commentary which seems to be more suitable or more closely resembling some motifs of the calf citation. Speaking of the winds which play a central part in this section on lightning and thunder, Averroes remarks that whirlwinds and storm winds have such a strength that they elevate ships and animals and throw them down in another place.⁹⁷ This description very probably goes back to Alexander of

nostris, neque aliquis de secta Peripateticorum memoravit hoc. Sed narravit Avicenna quod lapis magnus cecidit in Corduba, igneus in die sereno, seu claro, et quod ipse vidit illum lapidem, et habuit odorem sulphuris, et quasi naturam ammoniaci. et hoc non est remotum ».

⁹⁴ MANUEL ALONSO ALONSO, « Averroes, observador de la naturaleza », *Al-Andalus*, 5 (1940), p. 223, fn. 3.

⁹⁵ See IBN RUŠD, *Risālat al-Ātār al-'ulwiyya*, ed. RAFIQ AL-'AĞAM, ĠIRĀR ĠIHĀMĪ, Dār al-fikr al-lubnānī, Beirut 1994, 66. I am grateful to Vera Tsukanova for her help with the Arabic text. See also PAUL LETTINGER, *Aristotle's Meteorology and Its Reception in the Arab World: With an Edition and Translation of Ibn Suwār's Treatise on Meteorological Phenomena and Ibn Bājjā's Commentary on the Meteorology*, Brill, Leiden, 1999 (Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus, 10), p. 239–240. Curiously, the error of the Latin translation is uncritically reproduced in the historical astronomy. Thus, MARÍA JOSÉ MARTÍNEZ USÓ, FRANCISCO J. MARCO CASTILLO, « A Survey of Meteoric Activity over Spain during the Eighth–Fifteenth Centuries », *Journal for the History of Astronomy*, 47/2 (2016), p. 168–193, adduce this example from the Latin translation of Averroes immediately after the meteorite mentioned by Ibn Ḥayyān as seen in 973. On Averroes' criticism of Avicenna in *Meteorology* see CRISTINA CERAMI, « A Map of Averroes' Criticism against Avicenna: *Physics*, *De caelo*, *De generatione et corruptione* and *Meteorology* », in DAG NIKOLAUS HASSE, AMOS BERTOLACCI (eds.), *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna's Physics and Cosmology*, De Gruyter, Berlin – New York 2018 (Scientia Graeco-Arabica, 23), p. 163–240, at 212–231, and esp. 227–228.

⁹⁶ On the sceptical attitude of Averroes see AMOS BERTOLACCI, « Averroes against Avicenna on Human Spontaneous Generation: The Starting-Point of a Lasting Debate », in ANNA AKASOY, GUIDO GIGLIONI (eds.), *Renaissance Averroism and its Aftermath: Arabic Philosophy in Early Modern Europe*, Springer, Dordrecht 2013 (Archives internationales d'histoire des idées, 211), p. 37–54.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 446v: « Et omnes isti venti circumeuntes vocantur venti vertiginosi, et tempestuosi: et isti sunt venti fortes, ex quorum fortitudine accidit eleuare naues, et animalia, et projicere illa ad locum alium ».

Aphrodisias,⁹⁸ and was, as we have seen, readily repeated later by Averroists to explain away the calf phenomenon. And still, it brings us no closer to understanding the origin of this citation.

But the greatest problem is that by Albert's time only one of Averroes's Commentaries on Aristotle's *Meteorology* had been translated, namely, on Book IV, and the rest became available to the Latin reading audience no sooner than in the late 15th century when Elia del Medigo translated commentaries on the Books I–III.⁹⁹ Thus, Albert could not possibly have known the part of Averroes's Commentaries which discusses the problem of thunder and lightning.

If we look for similar themes and motifs from Averroes's works that were undoubtedly known to Albert, we cannot miss Averroes's discussion of Avicenna's theory of spontaneous generation. In *De causis propr.* I, 2, 13 briefly discussed above, Albert expounds the dispute on the floods and re-creation of species between Avicenna and Averroes. After summing up Avicenna's position, he proceeds to unveil Averroes's counterarguments aimed at demonstrating that perfect animals « cannot be restored by the stars and the elements alone ».¹⁰⁰ In Albert's presentation, there are three main reasons, namely, 1) that perfect animals necessarily need a place where a semen could develop, that is, the uterus; 2) that this spontaneous regeneration of perfect animals should theoretically be a rather frequent phenomenon, but such cases have been never reported by anyone; 3) since the principle of economy or efficacy predominates in nature, there would be no need for sexual reproduction. Albert adopts a middle position by noting that both authorities have points to agree with. His approach lies in moving the demarcation line which differentiates one kind of animals from another. Avicenna does not exclude the possibility of spontaneous generation for all animals, and Averroes, according to Albert, completely denies such possibility for all the perfect animals which are characterized by « a great diversity in their members ».¹⁰¹ But Albert includes into the category of animals capable of spontaneous generation

⁹⁸ For the Greek text see ALEXANDER APHRODISIENSIS, *In Aristotelis Meteorologicorum libros commentaria*, ed. MICHAEL HAYDUCK, Reimer, Berlin 1899, p. 136; cf. the Latin translation by Willam of Moerbeke in ALEXANDRE D'APHRODISIAS, *Commentaire sur les Météores d'Aristote: Traduction de Guillaume de Moerbeke*, ed. ALFONS J. SMET, Leuvense Universitaire Uitgaven, Leuven 1968 (Corpus latinum commentariorum in Aristotelem graecorum, 4), p. 216: « Propter quod ex mari frequenter quidem aquam trahit, iam autem alicubi et navem elevavit, coassumens revolutioni. Ex terra autem et lapides et alia quaedam elevavit, iam autem et animalia ».

⁹⁹ See DAG NIKOLAUS HASSE, *Latin Averroes Translations of the First Half of the Thirteenth Century*, Olms, Hildesheim 2010, p. 28–29; MARC GEOFFROY, « Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Latin Translations of », in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy: Philosophy between 500 and 1500*, ed. HENRIK LAGERLUND, Springer, Dordrecht 2011, p. 501–507. The translation of the Book IV is sometimes attributed to Michael Scot, but there seems to be not enough grounds for this assumption, see HASSE, *Latin Averroes Translations*, 28–29.

¹⁰⁰ ALBERT THE GREAT, *On the Causes of the Properties of the Elements*, trans. RESNICK, p. 92.

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*.

some small 'perfect' animals, such as mice and bats, pointing out that it is impossible for more perfect animals such as lions, oxen and men.¹⁰² This seems to differ from Albert's earlier position expressed in his *Physica* VIII.2.10 where he criticizes Averroes, showing that his views logically imply the possibility of human spontaneous generation.¹⁰³ It is, however, to be questioned if Albert is endorsing this stance himself and not just summarizing Averroes's argumentation demonstrating its logical implications.

Further on, Albert mentions two more objections by Averroes, one being that there are no universal floods which would destroy all living beings on the earth, and the other deserves our closest attention, for it has many points in common with our topic.

But Averroes says that what is said about the stars is true in similar animals and he says that it is not true in dissimilar animals, because if by chance a shape [*figura*] is impressed by a star on some body or animal, it does not develop the strength for life, but is dead. For stones are found shaped in a human likeness and likewise monsters, which do not develop a strength for life, which nonetheless must arise from the power of the stars. (trans. by Resnick, p. 93–94)

Here one finds a constellation of motifs, in many ways resembling the calf passage: the stars can impress an animal form on matter, but in case of an impression of an animal form which is dissimilar, it cannot live.¹⁰⁴ This argument, as many others in Albert's recount, more or less corresponds to the actual views of Averroes on spontaneous generation and his criticism of Avicenna expressed first of all in his Commentaries on *Physics* and *Metaphysics*.¹⁰⁵ Here, in particular, one can point to a similar mention of monstrosity by Averroes, who wrote that « therefore no species occurs by chance, but those which occur by chance are monsters, not natural [beings] ». ¹⁰⁶ However, as pointed out by van der Lugt,¹⁰⁷ some of these arguments cannot be found in Averroes's works, but occur in the

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 93: « In the same way, however, it seems that one ought to agree that stars have the power to produce animals that are not too dissimilar, such as mice and bats, and any others of this sort that exist in kinds of animals. For although [animals] like these have instruments of motion, like wings and legs, they nonetheless have short and not very different ones. But for the reproduction of perfect animals, like the lion and the ox and the human, they seem to suffice in no way ».

¹⁰³ HASSE, « Spontaneous Generation », 164.

¹⁰⁴ On the stars and on the development of Averroes's position see GAD FREUDENTHAL, « The Medieval Astrologization of Aristotle's Biology: Averroes on the Role of the Celestial Bodies in the Generation of Animate Being », *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 12 (2002), p. 111–137.

¹⁰⁵ See BERTOLACCI, « Averroes against Avicenna »; CERAMI, « A Map of Averroes' Criticism »; HASSE, *Urzeugung und Weltbild: Aristoteles – Ibn Ruschd – Pasteur*, Olms, Hildesheim, 2006; ID., « Spontaneous Generation ».

¹⁰⁶ *Aristotelis opera cum Averrois commentariis*, vol. IV, apud Junttas, Venetiis 1562, fol. 387r: « et ideo nulla species invenitur casu [i.e. spontaneously], sed illa quae inveniuntur casu, sunt monstrosa, non naturalia ». Cf. esp. HASSE, « Spontaneous Generation », p. 162.

¹⁰⁷ VAN DER LUGT, *Le ver, le démon et la Vierge*, p. 172–173.

writings of earlier Latin scholars, for example, Roland of Cremona so that it appears plausible that Albert attributed them to Averroes or borrowed from a text which contained such an attribution.¹⁰⁸ It is instructive that in his later work *De XV problematibus* Albert again invokes the distinction between perfect and imperfect animals with regard to the ability of the latter to be generated from the putrefaction with the explicit reference to Averroes's Commentary on the 1st book of *Metaphysics*.¹⁰⁹ A few lines below in the same passage he reiterates his argument that the most perfect animals cannot be generated through the stars alone. However, this time he does not mention Averroes, but ascribes this opinion generally to « philosophy ».¹¹⁰

Thus, although it is conceivable that Averroes could easily distort a phrase or formulation of Avicenna in order to attack him more violently,¹¹¹ this appears not to be the case here. The hypothesis of the Renaissance scholars that the calf story could ultimately go back not to Avicenna, but to Averroes, finds no confirmation. On the other hand, the absence of any mention in Averroes can be regarded as an indirect evidence that the story does not appear in Avicenna's writings. Given Averroes's attitude to Avicenna, he would certainly not have missed the opportunity to defame his perpetual opponent and to deride this fabulous example if he would have come across something similar in Avicenna's writings.

VI. Parallels

The picture would not be complete without considering some parallels, which have no direct connection to the calf story, but nevertheless demonstrate that a calf and its fall from heaven is not an isolated motif in the medieval thought.

Celestial phenomena are frequently linked to animals. A kind of meteorites was known as « goats ».¹¹² Al-Qazwīnī, referring to al-Jāhīz, describes a dark cloud from which as if a camel's low was heard and which poured down frogs and thick fishes.¹¹³ Barhebraeus, in his compendium completed in 1286, states that he has seen « large stones of hail which fell in the shape of horns and heads of oxen, sheep

¹⁰⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁰⁹ ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Opera omnia*, ed. Coloniensis, vol. XVII/1, p. 38: « Homo autem, sicut nec aliquod perfectorum animalium non est de his quae nasci possunt per putrefactionem, sicut dicit Averroes super XI Metaphysicae ».

¹¹⁰ Ibidem: « Si forte dicat, quod ex constellatione diversae generationes fiant in diversis habitationis principiis, hoc iterum est contra philosophiam, quae dicit perfectissima animalia ex solis constellationibus nasci non posse ».

¹¹¹ See e.g., BERTOLACCI, « Averroes against Avicenna », p. 43–44.

¹¹² For the use of this word by Aristotle, Avicenna and Averroes see LETTINCK, *Aristotle's Meteorology*, p. 18, 66, 81, 89.

¹¹³ AL-QAZWĪNĪ, *Die Wunder des Himmels und der Erde*, trans. ALMA GIESE, Thienemann, Edition Erdmann, Stuttgart 1986 (Bibliothek arabischer Klassiker, 11), p. 38.

and horses ».¹¹⁴ Muḥammad Ibn Mūsā Al-Ṭālishī (late 15th cent.) mentions even a « common parlance about 'stones and animals falling' in rain ». ¹¹⁵ Here I will discuss, however, only two topics which seem to have more in common with the subject of the paper than the various accounts of falling frogs and worms that abound in medieval treatises and chronicles and, of course, also remind of the 10 plagues of Egypt.¹¹⁶

VI.1. The calf and the log

Examples involving a calf are frequent in discussions of God's power and its limits. The most common case is the transformation of a log into a calf. Thus, in his *Regulae theologicae*, Alanus ab Insulis draws a distinction between two kinds of impossible things – for an inferior and for a superior reason.¹¹⁷ What violates the natural course of things is impossible for an inferior reason, e.g. a virgin giving birth. Something which is impossible for a superior reason is what cannot be accomplished by God, e.g. God cannot make Himself not good. All that is impossible for a superior reason is also impossible for an inferior reason, but not *vice versa*. He gives then the following example:

It is impossible for a log to be a calf by the law of nature, but God would be able to remove the nature of a log from its subject and imprint to it the nature of a calf; if it is done, the log ceases to be a log and begins to be a calf; although such an action is against nature, when it happens, what had previously been a log naturally, now would be a calf against nature.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ HIDEMI TAKAHASHI, *Aristotelian Meteorology in Syriac: Barhebraeus, Butyrum Sapientiae, Books of Mineralogy and Meteorology*, Brill, Leiden 2004 (Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus, 15), p. 147.

¹¹⁵ HIDEMI TAKAHASHI, « A Treatise on Meteorology By Muḥammad Ibn Mūsā Al-Ṭālishī (Ms. Daiber Collection II, 82) », in ANNA AKASOY, WIM RAVEN (eds.), *Islamic Thought in the Middle Ages: Studies in Text, Transmission and Translation, in Honour of Hans Daiber*, Brill, Leiden 2008 (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science: Texts and Studies, 75), p. 363–401, at 383.

¹¹⁶ I am thankful to the anonymous reviewer who reminded me of this evident example which I overlooked.

¹¹⁷ ALANUS AB INSULIS, *Regulae de sacra theologia*, in *Patrologia Latina* 210, col. 648: « Reg. LVIII Omne impossibile secundum inferiorem causam, ad quod sequitur impossibile secundum superiorem, est impossibile Deo ».

¹¹⁸ Ibidem: « Truncum enim esse vitulum est impossibile secundum legem naturae; posset tamen Deus naturam trunci a subjecto remove, et vituli naturam ei imprimere; quod si fieret, truncus desineret esse truncus et inciperet esse vitulus; licet hoc fieri sit contra naturam, tamen cum factum esset, quod prius naturaliter erat truncus, nunc contra naturam esset vitulus ». Cf. in the similar context his *Quoniam homines*, 86 (PALÉMON GLORIEUX, « La somme 'Quoniam homines' d'Alain de Lille », *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 20 (1953), p. 113–364, at 230): « Item queritur cum Deus de albo potest facere nigrum et de trunco vitulum... ».

Here we find an analogy between the miraculous virgin birth and another supernatural event involving a calf, not very different from a similar analogy proposed in *Defensorium* by Franz von Retz. Another common point is the notion of impression: God imprints the nature of a calf onto a log just as celestial bodies imprint the form of a calf on the matter within a cloud. This discussion and example were reproduced by Simon of Tournai.¹¹⁹ Giles of Rome took advantage of this hypothetical miracle in connection with Christ's conception and birth.¹²⁰ He addresses the question in what respect it is natural and in what miraculous, and elaborates a four-partite scheme of possibilities: 1. Generation takes place from a natural substance through a natural agent, which is completely natural as the generation of a child by its parents. 2. Generation from an unnatural substance through an unnatural agent, which is completely miraculous as the generation of the first man from the dust of the ground by the divine power. 3. Generation from a natural substance through an unnatural agent, and this is exactly the case with Christ's conception; therefore it is completely miraculous, but in a certain respect (that of the substance) natural. 4. The fourth possibility – generation from an unnatural substance through a natural agent – is purely theoretical because it is impossible. Then he adduces the example of a log and a calf to show that generation from an unnatural substance may be caused only by an unnatural agent: « A calf, however, could become from a log, which is not a natural substance of a calf, through the divine power ».¹²¹

VI.2. The golden calf

Another parallel that immediately suggests itself is the story of the golden calf. William of Auvergne, Bishop of Paris, in his treatise on the laws (*De legibus*) considers it at length, mentioning a number of opinions as to why the idol created by Aaron was in form of a calf and not in any other shape. According to William, some believed that it occurred regardless of Aaron's intentions, because the sign of Taurus was rising and its head ascending. They share the opinion of those who attribute all animals' shapes to the celestial bodies. Others say it was a deliberate choice by Aaron who had in mind Serapis – an Egyptian deity adored in the form of a bull. Still others think that in this calf they venerated the celestial bull – their proper sign according to some professors of astronomy who considered Taurus to be the sign of the Jews just like Saturn to be their planet. William himself finds this

¹¹⁹ NIKOLAUS M. HÄRING, « Two Redactions of a Commentary on a Gallican Creed by Simon of Tournai », *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 41 (1974), p. 39–112, at 50 and 88.

¹²⁰ AEGIDIUS COLUMNAE ROMANUS, *In tertium librum sententiarum eruditissima commentaria cum quaestionibus*, ex typ. Alexandri Zanetti, Romae 1623, p. 127.

¹²¹ Ibidem: « Posset tamen virtute diuina de trunco, qui non est naturalis materia vituli, fieri vitulus ».

view more plausible,¹²² but for the present study, the mention of the link between animal shapes and celestial bodies is significant.

A most interesting interpretation of the story, although related not to Aaron's, but to Jeroboam's golden calves (I Kings 12:25–33), appears in Mishnah (Sota 47a = Snh. 107b). In the mishnaic account, Gehazi, a corrupt servant of Elisha, « put a magnet over the casts made by Jeroboam, and they were suspended in the air ».¹²³ One finds another mention of a levitating calf in the talmudic discussion of sorcery (Snh. 7):

Yannai said, I was walking on a road in Sepphoris when I saw a Minean taking a pebble, throwing it into the air, after which it came down transforming itself into a calf. But did not Rebbi Eleazar say in the name of Rebbi Yose ben Zimra: If all people of the world came together, they could not create one mosquito and bring it to life. Let us say that this Minean did not take a pebble, threw it into the air, after which it came down transforming itself into a calf, but he called on his genie who stole a calf for him from a cattle barn and brought it to him.

Rebbi Hinena ben Hanania said: I was promenading at Gufta of Sepphoris when I saw a Minean taking a skull, throwing it into the air, after which it came down transforming itself into a calf. I went and told it to my father. He said, if you ate from it, it was an action; otherwise it was an illusion.¹²⁴

¹²² GUILLELMUS DE ALVERNIA, *Opera omnia*, t. I, apud Dionysium Thierry, Paris 1674, p. 83: « Nonnulli autem credunt, quia pro eo exivit forma vituli, quod tauri signum erat in ortu et caput eius ascendebat. Et hi sunt de opinione eorum, qui omnes figuras animalium coelestibus corporibus attribuunt. Aliis autem videtur, quia formam vituli conflari sibi petierunt ab Aaron, et hoc propter consuetudinem Aegyptiae idolatriae, ubi adorabatur Serapis, qui in forma tauri consueverat apparere Aegyptiis [...] aliis enim videtur, quod in vitulo illo conflati colere intenderent taurum coelestem, id est signum, de quo fecimus mentionem, tanquam proprium signum suum, et a quo tota fortuna et infortunium eorum penderet; opinati namque sunt aliqui ex astronomiae professoribus taurum signum esse regis, et legis Hebraeorum, quemadmodum et Saturnum planetam eorum, de quo supra fecimus mentionem. Stellae quoque Saturni veneratio et cultura apud barbaros mirabiliter inolevit antiquitus et adhuc apud spurcissimas gentes et barbarissimas Gog scilicet et Magog viget, atque generaliter observatur, unde et lingua sua vocant eum marcholon, id est stellam Deorum. Verisimile autem est hoc, quod in idolo illo tauri vel vituli coleretur taurus coelestis ». On the passage in the context of medieval doctrine of *impressio* cf. WEILL-PAROT, *Les 'images astrologiques' au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance: spéculations intellectuelles et pratiques magiques (XII^e–XV^e siècle)*, Honoré Champion Éditeur, Paris 2002 (Sciences, techniques et civilisations du Moyen Âge à l'aube des Lumières, 6), p. 193–194.

¹²³ Translation by MICHAEL L. RODKINSON, *New Edition of the Babylonian Talmud*, vol. VII–VIII, New Talmud Publishing Company, New York 1902, p. 349. Cf. IMMANUEL LÖW, « Review of Edmund O. von Lippmann, *Geschichte der Magnetnadel bis zur Erfindung des Kompasses* (gegen 1300), Berlin, 1932 », *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*, 76 (40)/4 (1932), p. 456–463; BERNHARD HELLER, « Zu S. 456–463 », *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*, 77(41)/1 (1933), p. 61–63.

¹²⁴ HEINRICH W. GUGGENHEIMER (ed.), *The Jerusalem Talmud. Fourth Order: Neziqin. Tractates Sanhedrin, Makkot, and Horaiot*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2010 (Studia Judaica: Forschungen zur Wissenschaft des

Of course, these accounts differ from the calf story if only because it involves an object (pebble or skull) thrown up into the air and it is not clear at which moment the transformation takes place. Nevertheless, with all the differences in details, these anecdotes are the closest parallels to Albert's calf example I have come across so far. I am unaware of any reception of this tradition in Latin texts, but there is a curious pictorial parallel from around 1500. A follower of Filippino Lippi depicted what is believed to be a scene of worship of the Egyptian Bull God, Apis (now in the National Gallery, London) (Fig. 2, below).¹²⁵

The image of a calf levitating in the air is very similar to the representation of the calf story in *Defensorium* (see above); on the other hand, the moon symbol is reminiscent of the moon-calf mentioned by Wilkins. One can only speculate on the sources used by the artist, but the fact is that it is a very rare visual depiction of a flying calf / bull motif which finds its closest cognate in illustrations of block-books with Franz of Retz's text which are chronologically not very far from the dating of this picture.

VII. Conclusion

As demonstrated above, the calf story played a central role in late medieval and humanistic discussions of spontaneous generation. Although the references given by different authors may vary, their ultimate source was Albert the Great who in his turn attributes it to Avicenna. For this reason, the attitude to the story came to be indicative of the attitude to Avicenna's views on spontaneous generation and his philosophy in general: those who sided with Averroes in his criticism usually derided the calf example as nonsense. However, it is most probable that the Avicenna attribution is ungrounded and therefore the scorn of the later scholars was in fact directed not against Avicenna, but towards Albert. But where did Albert borrow this citation from, is an open question. I have not been able to find any direct parallels in magical, alchemical, astrological, natural philosophical sources or in secondary literature.

It is already puzzling that the story occurs only in the *Meteora* in the discussion of the lightning and is not mentioned in any other place directly pertaining to the issue of animal generation. In this connection, it may also be noted that the most prominent scholars who were either Albert's students or his followers – the most outstanding examples being Thomas Aquinas and Conrad of Megenberg – do not ever refer to Avicenna's calf. Perhaps, they were critical enough to recognize the spuriousness of the citation, but preferred to pass over it in silence – out of

Judentums, 51), p. 283; cf. also ARTHUR MARMORSTEIN, « Beiträge zur Religionsgeschichte und Volkskunde », *Jahrbuch für jüdische Volkskunde*, 25 (1923), p. 280–319.

¹²⁵ London, National Gallery, Follower of Filippino Lippi, *The Worship of the Egyptian Bull God Apis*, c. 1500.

reverence to their teacher. Indeed, the mention of the calf story appears in the *Summa* by Albert of Orlamünde, who merely epitomized the texts by Albert the Great, but this is to my knowledge the only instance of a chronologically immediate reception of the story which seems not to enter the scholarly and popular discourse until the 14th century, and this gap is perhaps telling. Thereafter, the calf example makes its way into such fields as alchemy and popular miracle literature and re-appears with full force in humanistic studies, this time very soon as a punching bag.

Although some more or less similar motifs related to calves do occur in earlier and contemporaneous literature, it is extremely unlikely that they could have served as a source for Albert. Some of them resemble the calf story only tangentially, while others, which most closely resemble it, come from a tradition which Albert was most probably not acquainted with (as in the case of the Talmudic parallels).

In these circumstances, it may be only speculated as to which kind of source could have been the basis for Albert's citation. It might have been some pseudo-Avicennian writing which has not come down to us; or a marginal comment or gloss incorporated or perceived to be incorporated into some text of Avicenna. The cause might also have been a misreading of a manuscript text, a misinterpretation or a *lapsus memoriae*. Finally, a deliberate invention and attribution to Avicenna in order to lend it authority cannot be completely excluded.

A significant carelessness in citing the sources is to be seen in Albert's interpretation of Averroes discussed above, but there is at least an earlier source that can be pointed to, which demonstrates the same line of arguments. In case of the calf story, there is no such source, and the situation much more resembles the one with Albert's citations from Theophrastus. Some of them correspond to the text by Theophrastus, some are problematic, and for some « the sources of Albert's information remain, at present, a mystery ». ¹²⁶ It is most interesting, however, that these enigmatic references are likewise related to the issue of generation and attribute the view that constellations can cause monstrous births to the 'Peripatetics' Porphyry and Theophrastus. Although a direct comparison is hampered by the fact that Albert does not introduce this example in the context of spontaneous generation, the similarity should not go unnoticed. It is remarkable that the references and attributions given by Albert in relation to this topic are untraceable or at present undetectable. It would be perhaps not too far-fetched to suppose that he had obvious difficulties with citing authorities on this issue. However, in order to correctly evaluate these particular inaccuracies, a general study of Albert's attitude to citations would be required.

¹²⁶ ROBERT W. SHARPLES, « Some Medieval and Renaissance Citations of Theophrastus », *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 47 (1984), p. 186–190.

The problem of citation identification in medieval scholarship is persistent. Amos Bertolacci has recently drawn attention to implicit citations from Avicenna in Latin philosophy and called for a « substantial revision of the indices and the apparati fontium of the existing editions ». ¹²⁷ However, the present study demonstrates that explicit citations may be no less challenging, and a comprehensive re-assessment of explicit citations will certainly bring to light many puzzling perplexities and unexpected discoveries.

¹²⁷ BERTOLACCI, « The reception of Avicenna », p. 254.



Fig. 1: München, Universitätsbibliothek, Cim. 49, fol. 7v.



Fig. 2: London, National Gallery, Follower of Filippino Lippi, *The Worship of the Egyptian Bull God Apis*, c. 1500.

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THE WAY PHILOSOPHERS PRAY: HYMNS AS EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE*

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Abstract

Beginning with the work of Marsilio Ficino through the poems of Michele Marullo, Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola, Pierre Ronsard, Edmund Spenser and others, this essay discusses the revival and fortune of philosophical hymns in Quattrocento Italy and the diffusion of this genre in Early Modern Europe. In doing so, we will attempt at framing this phenomenon in the context of Early Modern religious pluralism and interpret it as an instance of experiential knowledge.

Key Words

Hymns, Neoplatonism, Religious Pluralism.



In common parlance as well as in standard histories of philosophy the language of prayer and the language of reason are ascribed to different, if not contrasting, domains. Scholars commonly distinguish between petitionary prayers and meditative prayers. The former entail a specific request addressed to a non-human entity such as a god, a planet or a personified abstract concept. The latter consist of the ritualized repetition of words meant to prepare the subject's soul to receive otherwise inaccessible truths.¹ Neither of these acts and their defining languages, however, are generally associated with the form of knowledge expected to be found in philosophical texts. Ritual invocations, commands, direct

* This article builds on the research performed as part of the SSHRC-funded academic project « Self-Transformation in Early Modern Europe », directed by Matteo Soranzo.

¹ GREGORY D. ALLES et al., « Prayer », in *Religion Past and Present Online*. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1877-5888_rpp_COM_08151>.

questions, lists of divine attributes and descriptions of the subject's grasp of things precluded to discursive knowledge would be out of place in an anthology of philosophical texts. Aesthetically pleasing or culturally interesting, the ceremonial phrases, theurgical operations and – to use the expression coined by Pierre Hadot – 'spiritual exercises' disseminated throughout the most representative texts of ancient philosophy are often dismissed as a product of the times, which the historian of philosophy is called to remove from what are conventionally thought to be philosophical problems. Convenient as it might be for didactic purposes, however, is this operation useful from a historical perspective?

At the core of today's selective approach to philosophical texts, one finds enduring assumptions concerning the forms of knowledge traditionally considered philosophical. After Descartes, *a priori* and propositional knowledge imposed themselves as suitable for a definition of philosophy extolling theory over practice and mind over body. Conversely, experiential knowledge, intuition and other forms of non-discursive thinking such as bodily experience, performance and rituals ended up being dismissed as inferior, unreliable or confined to other, non-philosophical domains of investigation.² Western cultural history, however, gives evidence of a much more diversified scenario characterized by a dramatically broader notion of what may count as knowledge. Rituals and the performance of ceremonial prayers, for example, are widely documented in Plato and, most importantly, in some of his late antique interpreters such as Plotinus, Proclus, and Iamblichus.³ Somewhat unsurprisingly, however, histories of philosophy have the tendency to characterize these facets of Neoplatonism as 'sub-philosophical phenomena' and ascribe them to an 'underworld' responsible for the corruption of an otherwise rational philosophical tradition.⁴

Philosophers writing in the aftermath of Descartes generally dismissed philosophical prayers as unfitting for philosophical discourse and perceived

² KEVIN SCHILBRACK, « Introduction; on the Use of Philosophy in the Study of Rituals », in KEVIN SCHILBRACK (ed.), *Thinking Through Rituals: Philosophical Perspectives*, Routledge, New York 2004, p. 1–30.

³ Recent scholarship has nevertheless started to inquire in this traditionally neglected facet of Neoplatonism. see, for instance, JOHN M. DILLON, ANDREI TIMOTIN (eds.), *Platonic Theories of Prayer*, Brill, Leiden 2016 (Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition, 19); ANDREI TIMOTIN, *La prière dans la tradition platonicienne, de Plato à Proclus*, Brepols, Turnhout 2017 (Recherches sur les rhétoriques religieuses, 22).

⁴ WOUTER J. HANEGRAAFF, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2012, p. 12–13. In his critique of dismissive treatments of Neoplatonic rituals, Hanegraaff is referring to JOHN M. DILLON's seminal work *The Middle Platonists, 80 BC–AD 220*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca 1977. This relatively old book, however, might not represent Dillon's current view on the subject.

rituals as ‘thoughtless acts’.⁵ As this essay will illustrate, however, the rationalist rebuttal of philosophical prayers was only one possible outcome of a number of possibilities available in Early Modern Europe. As they deployed their scholarly skills to investigate ancient documents, Renaissance interpreters of Plato like Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), for example, paid close attention to the role experiential knowledge played in their sources. The arguments, doxologies, propositions and refutations found in Ficino’s *Platonic Theology*, in this respect, are complementary to the rituals, prayers, dietary restrictions and regimented lifestyle discussed in the *Three Books on Life* – a text not commonly found in histories of philosophy. At the same time, humanistically trained scholars like Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1470–1533) perceived the recitation of prayers straying from Christian liturgical practice as deeply problematic, thus contributing to suppressing or confining this genre to non-philosophical domains such as antiquarianism or literature. The exclusion of prayer from philosophical discourse, as we contend, is thus a multifaceted phenomenon entangled with broader historical trends such as Renaissance humanism, the Protestant Reformation and Early Modern literary history. This essay will attempt to interpret this phenomenon in light of Kocku von Stuckrad’s notions of Early Modern religious pluralism and, more specifically, this scholar’s concept of experiential knowledge.

In a conversation with other historians of religions, von Stuckrad has recently challenged the dominant narrative of Europe as a homogeneously Christian continent headed toward secularization. Religious identities, in this scholar’s perspective, are best understood as the result of a negotiation among different external (e.g. Christianity, Islam, Judaism) and internal (Neoplatonism, Hermeticism, Kabbalah) options. European culture, on the other hand, is approached as the site for a plurality of diverse, and often competing, ways of attaining knowledge (e.g. syllogistic reasoning, dialogue, contemplation), associated with different institutions of learning (e.g. universities, courts, monasteries) often in contrast with each other. Approaching religion as a set of discursive practices and communications, von Stuckrad has defined experiential knowledge as a claim to an absolute truth, which cannot be phrased in the usual language of reasoning but can only be announced to the reader by means of exhortations, commands, metaphors and symbols. In this perspective, tracing the history of experiential knowledge consists in observing the inclusion or exclusion of this discursive form in, or from the institutions of learning available in a given period.⁶

⁵ SCHILBRACK, « Introduction: on the Use of Philosophy », p. 1–2.

⁶ KOCKU VON STUCKRAD, *Locations of Knowledge in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Esoteric Discourse and Western Identities*, Brill, Leiden 2010 (Brill’s Studies in Intellectual History, 186), p. 7–24. VON STUCKRAD has further refined this analytical framework in the first chapter of his *The*

This essay will interpret philosophical prayers as instances of the aforementioned language of experiential knowledge. Rooted in ancient texts like the gradual initiation to the noetic contemplation of Beauty described by Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*, this language – as Sarah Rappe has thoroughly illustrated – is also present in the numerous allusions to non-discursive thinking disseminated in the works of Plotinus, Proclus and Damascius.⁷ As we contend, the Quattrocento rediscovery of philosophical hymns brought about a revival of experiential knowledge in the context of the new and eclectic spirituality adopted by some Renaissance humanists.⁸ As they learned to approach and appreciate antiquity in its alterity, Early Modern authors found themselves entangled in a clash of symbolic paradigms in their search for significance. Hymn singing, in the form of meditative or petitionary prayer, offered a viable form of synthesis between non-Christian antiquity and Christian early modernity, which were perceived, at times, as potentially complementary, and at other times as diametrically opposed.

1. Plato, Plotinus and Ficino's Prayers

Marsilio Ficino's revival of Plato's philosophy is the starting point in the rediscovery of philosophical hymns mapped in this essay. Plato's works, of course, had been partially known throughout the Middle Ages, and genuinely Platonic themes, often mediated by Arabic commentators of Aristotle, had already made their way into European Universities and monastic schools.⁹ Moreover, a halo of sanctity largely dependent on Augustine and Boethius had long surrounded Plato and his teachings. Not only the erudite monks of the School of Chartres but also poets such as Dante and Petrarch had long acknowledged Plato's role in paving the way for Christian revelation. Limited access to original sources, a general lack of commentaries comparable to those accompanying Aristotle's works and, most importantly, a curriculum of learning

Scientification of Religion: An Historical Study of Discursive Change, 1800–2000, De Gruyter, Boston – Berlin 2014. Although tested upon a corpus of relatively modern texts, von Stuckrad's discourse analysis, in our view, might have a great potential for analyzing other early modern 'entanglements' of philosophical and religious discourses such as those examined in this essay.

⁷ SARAH A. RAPPE, *Reading Neoplatonism: Non-Discursive Thinking in the Texts of Plotinus, Proclus, and Damascius*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007, p. 20–21.

⁸ MATTEO SORANZO, « Words of Conversion: Poetry and Religious Identity in Early Modern Italy », *Journal of Religion in Europe*, 6 (2013), p. 229–262; ID., « A New Look at Spirituality: Knowledge and Transformation in Early Modern Italy », *Journal of Religion in Europe*, 8 (2015), p. 185–209.

⁹ STEPHEN GERSH, « The Medieval Legacy from Ancient Platonism », in STEPHEN GERSH et al. (eds.), *The Platonic tradition in the Middle Ages: A Doxographic Approach*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2002, p. 3–30; JAMES HANKINS, « Plato in the Middle Ages », in JOSEPH STRAYER, WILLIAM CHESTER JORDAN (ed.), *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, vol. IX, Scribner and Sons, New York 1987, p. 694–704.

founded on Scholasticism had all contributed to preclude Western European readers from Plato's dialogues. The failed attempt to reunite the Eastern and Western Churches in 1439, the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and the enduring migration of Byzantine scholars and books to the Italian peninsula, are among the factors that paved the way for Ficino's intellectual enterprise and its manifold intellectual ramifications.¹⁰

For readers accustomed to the conventional idea of philosophy as the rational investigation of universal truths, the new chapter started by Ficino and his followers might seem an oddity. The philosopher from Figline was a self-proclaimed 'doctor of the soul' inclined to ecstatic experiences and animated by a quasi-prophetic zeal to transform the souls of scholars and political leaders of the time. He was loyal to a Hellenistic idea of philosophy that, as Pierre Hadot influentially argued, used to be conceived as a way of life rather than a purely theoretical pursuit.¹¹ Like other Renaissance scholars, Ficino rediscovered this ancient idea of what counts as philosophy in contrast with, and often in response to, the research questions and established curricula of readings characterizing traditional institutions of learning such as, most importantly, universities.¹² Free from academic constraints, Ficino became immersed in the work of late antique philosophers such as Plotinus, Proclus, Iamblichus and – much like these authors before him – non-Christian Revelations such as the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the *Orphica*, and the *Oracula Chaldaica*. In line with his late antique predecessors, Ficino and his followers drew from Plato's dialogues the coordinates of a mystical path toward spiritual transformation and reunion with the metaphysical One. This broader notion of philosophy diverged from the still dominant view of this discipline as an *ancilla theologiae* useful for, but subordinate to, the pursuit of Christian faith. The factors that make Ficino somewhat unusual as a philosopher, however, are at the origin of his influence on spirituality, magic, literature and the visual arts, and at the forefront of his relatively recent scholarly revival.¹³

An important aspect of Ficino's legacy is his impact on religious practices and, more specifically, on prayer. Indeed, scholars have recently analyzed Ficino's theology in the context of fifteenth-century religious history. Christopher Celenza has persuasively proposed to approach Ficino's distinctive philosophical persona in terms of Garth Fowden's notion of Late Ancient 'holy man,' thus emphasizing the Florentine's conception of philosophy as a form of spiritual

¹⁰ JAMES HANKINS, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, Brill, Leiden 1990 (Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition, 17), p. 300–301.

¹¹ PIERRE HADOT, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, trans. ARNOLD IRA DAVIDSON, Blackwell, Oxford 1995, p. 33, 271–272.

¹² CHRISTOPHER S. CELENZA, « What Counted as Philosophy in the Italian Renaissance », *Critical Inquiry*, 39/2 (2013), p. 367–401.

¹³ CHRISTOPHER S. CELENZA, « The Platonic Revival », in JAMES HANKINS (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007, p. 84–86.

practice.¹⁴ James Hankins, moreover, has persuasively interpreted Ficino's ecumenical acceptance of multiple religious traditions as a response to established theological discourses. Nominalism, Hankins has argued, entailed a sharp divisions between reason and faith. Thomism, on the other hand, attempted to understand God with the instruments of logic. Ficino's 'theological coherentism,' as Hankins has called it, was meant to be an alternative in the period of fluidity that preceded the Reformation and the Council of Trent.¹⁵ Wouter J. Hanegraaff has persuasively interpreted Ficino's religious views in the context of Western Esotericism. Whether one takes this category as a form of thought centered on recurrent themes such as the existence of a living nature and the agreement among different religious traditions or, rather, as a narrative centered on the belief in a perennial truth linking Antiquity and Christianity, Ficino has proven to be a central figure in defining this facet of European religious history.¹⁶ Brian Copenhaver and, most importantly, Denis Robichaud, moreover, have provided essential insights into the sources and philosophical premises of Ficino's adoption of theurgical practices and prayers.¹⁷ None of these scholars, however, have focused specifically on the features of Ficino's hymns or the influence they had on later authors of philosophical prayers. This omission is precisely what this essay seeks to address.¹⁸

This neglect, in our view, originates from a *vexata quaestio* in the scholarship on Ficino. Indeed, scholars have often focused on the role played by invocations, hymn singing, and ceremonies in Ficino's works, and have acknowledged the centrality of rituals in the Florentine's way of practicing philosophy. In his seminal study on Ficino's spiritual and demonic magic, Daniel P. Walker dedicated a long and inspiring chapter to the function Ficino attributed to theurgy, that is, the evocation of natural powers and supernatural entities in the context of a philosophical ritual. Walker concluded that Ficino did perform rituals involving prayers, invocations, singing, and liturgical hangings (i.e.

¹⁴ CHRISTOPHER S. CELENZA, « Late Antiquity and Florentine Platonism: the 'Post-Plotinian' Ficino » in MICHAEL J. B. ALLEN et al. (ed.), *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy*, Brill, Leiden 2002 (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 108), p. 82–83.

¹⁵ JAMES HANKINS, « Marsilio Ficino and the Religion of the Philosophers », *Rinascimento*, 48 (2008), p. 101–121.

¹⁶ HANEGRAAFF, *Esotericism and the Academy*, p. 41–53.

¹⁷ BRIAN P. COPENHAVER, « Renaissance Magic and Neoplatonic Philosophy: *Ennead* 4.3–5 in Ficino's *De vita coelitus comparanda* », in GIAN CARLO GARFAGNINI (ed.), *Marsilio Ficino e il ritorno di Platone*, Leo S. Olschki, Florence 1986 (Istituto nazionale di studi sul Rinascimento. Studi e testi, 15), vol. II, p. 351–369; DENIS ROBICHAUD, « Ficino on Force, Magic and Prayers. *Neoplatonic and Hermetic Influences in Ficino's Three Books on Life* », *Renaissance Quarterly*, 70/1 (2017), p. 44–87.

¹⁸ For a short overview of philosophical hymns and their history, see MATTEO SORANZO, « Les hymnes platoniciens et leur rôle dans la spiritualité prémoderne », in EVA KUSHNER (ed.), *L'époque de la Renaissance (1400–1600)*, t. II: *La nouvelle culture (1480–1520)*, Benjamins, Amsterdam 2017, p. 29–37.

banners etc.), the function of which was mainly to inspire the transformation of the officiant, rather than to have a practical effect on things, people, and events. Also, Walker influentially demonstrated that Ficino distinguished between a kind of magic that acts upon the *spiritus mundi* – an intermediate substance linking Matter and the World Soul – and another, more dangerous kind, which sought to act upon reality through the intervention of demons.¹⁹ Frances A. Yates, in conversation with Walker, further explored Ficino's views on prayers and invocations by examining the relationship between the commentary on Plotinus' *Enneads* and the *Three Books on Life*, a thorny philological problem that was first acknowledged by Kristeller, and which Yates tried to resolve by interpreting Ficino's conception of prayer as a facet of the author's enthusiastic revival of Hermetic magic.²⁰ While still persuasive and inspiring, however, these scholarly works only tangentially touched upon the actual form, context, and content of Ficino's prayers. Also, these studies tend to come to terms with the obvious strangeness of Ficino's revival of what is, ultimately, a non-Christian spiritual practice by confining it to the 'tainted' domain of magic, rather than investigating the spiritual needs Ficino's prayers might have meant to fulfill. Either way, by their *reductio ad magiam*, so to speak, Walker and Yates lost sight of an interesting aspect of Ficino's legacy that – as the long-lasting legacy of philosophical hymns demonstrates – goes beyond the specific domain of magic.

Contrary to what Walker and Yates argued, Ficino's views on prayer and the role invocations play in the life of philosophers are central aspects of his interpretation of Plato and Plotinus. Theurgical prayers, more precisely, are not confined to the domain of what Nicolas Weill-Parot has defined as 'addressative magic' and are only loosely connected with Ficino's interest in the *Corpus Hermeticum*.²¹ More precisely, Copenhaver has demonstrated that the third section of Ficino's *Three Books on Life* is best understood as a commentary on Plotinus' *Enneads* concerning the effects of prayers on nature, rather than an expression of hermetic magic. More recently, Robichaud has conducted an investigation of these texts and their sources, together with a meticulous examination of the marginal annotations Ficino left on his copies of Plotinus' text. In doing so, Robichaud has demonstrated that Ficino's interest in prayer was actually informed by Proclus, Iamblichus and Al-Kindi and not so much – as Yates argued – by the hermetic Asclepius. Robichaud, moreover, has shown that Ficino's

¹⁹ DANIEL P. WALKER, *Spiritual and Demoniac Magic from Ficino to Campanella*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame 1975, p. 30–59.

²⁰ FRANCES A. YATES, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1964, p. 62–84.

²¹ NICHOLAS WEILL-PAROT, « Astral Magic and Intellectual Changes (Twelfth– Fifteenth Centuries). Astrological Images and the Concept of Addressative Magic », in JAN N. BREMMER, JAN R. VEENSTRA, (eds.), *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, Peeters, Louvain 2001 (Groningen Studies in Cultural Change, 1), p. 167–188.

hermeneutical efforts stemmed from an apparent contradiction in Plotinus' conception of prayer, which at first sight might appear to be at odds with the philosopher's conception of the One as eternal, immovable and, thus, impervious to human requests. In fact, Ficino grafted onto his interpretation of Plotinus later theories of universal sympathy such as those found in Al-Kindi, thus producing a coherent view of prayer as a form of verbal meditation capable of making the officiant's soul resonate with the immovable One, rather than forcing the One to listen to a verbal utterance confined to a lower hypostasis.²²

Alongside the specific problems addressed in these studies, we suggest that the long-lasting difficulties in grappling with Ficino's conception of prayer have deeper roots. Although William James influentially called prayer « the very essence and soul of religion », scholars have unanimously acknowledged the difficulty of understanding what prayers ultimately are.²³ Depending on whether one investigates the content, context, form or ritual practice of prayers, as Roy Hammerling has recently contended, research can produce multiple, and at times conflicting, results.²⁴ Also, and most pertinent to the case of Ficino, prayers constitute a challenge for conventional boundaries between philosophy, theology, literature, and culture in general. Following in the footsteps of Jonathan Z. Smith, who first questioned the legitimacy of traditional distinctions between religion and other cultural activities, Hans G. Kippenberg and von Stuckrad have recently proposed to approach religious texts as instances of discursive practices taking place in a pluralistic context, rather than the documents of an actual experience or a distinct state of the mind.²⁵ In light of these methodological guidelines, we contend that Ficino contributed to the revival of an ancient form of experiential knowledge obtainable by means of the performance of hymns. Rather than magical incantations, Ficino and his followers perceived the recitation of philosophical hymns to be part of a meditative practice, the function of which was to awaken and prepare the soul to experience an absolute, non-discursive form of knowledge.²⁶

²² ROBICHAUD, « Ficino on Force, Magic and Prayers ».

²³ WILLIAM JAMES, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, Modern Library, New York 1936, p. 337.

²⁴ ROY HAMMERLING, « Introduction », in ROY HAMMERLING (ed.), *A History of Prayer: The First to the Fifteenth Century*, Medieval Academy of America, Cambridge 2009, p. 3–4.

²⁵ HANS G. KIPPENBERG, KOCKU VON STUCKRAD, *Einführung in die Religionswissenschaft*, Beck, Munich 2003, p. 136–46; VON STUCKRAD, « Discursive Study of Religion: from State of the Mind to Communication and Action », *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion*, 15/3 (2003), p. 255–271.

²⁶ In this sense, Ficino's views on prayers might be interpreted as an instance of the same expanded conception of philosophy he deployed in grappling with Plotinus' language of conversion. For a discussion of this theme, see DENIS ROBICHAUD, MATTEO SORANZO, « Philosophical or Religious Conversion? Marsilio Ficino, Plotinus' *Enneads* and Neoplatonic *epistrophe* », in SIMONA MARCHESINI (ed.), *Simple Twists of Faith, Changing Beliefs, Changing Faiths: People and Places*, Alteritas, Verona 2017, p. 135–166.

II. Ficino's Hymns and Spiritual Exercises

Grounded in his interpretative work on Plotinus' *Enneads*, Ficino's interest in ancient hymns was guided by more pressing needs than the satisfaction of scholarly curiosity. Browsing through Ficino's letters is sufficient to reveal the crucial role the performance of meditative prayers played in his philosophical project. Every day, one learns from Ficino's letter to Bernardo Rucellai, the philosopher would ask God for clarity of mind and good will by means of a long prayer (*oratio*), whose words are generously shared with his friend.²⁷ In a letter addressed to Cosimo de' Medici on September 8, 1462, the Florentine philosopher addresses his patron Cosimo as *pater patriae* and describes in detail the performance of a hymn taken from the *Orphic Hymns*, a collection of prayers traditionally attributed to the mythical poet Orpheus, which fifteenth-century humanists had recently brought to light.²⁸ Ficino's performance of Orpheus' hymn to the Cosmos is presented not only as an encomiastic poem but also as a ritual having tangible effects on both the philosopher's mind and his destiny, thus determining Cosimo's generosity toward the Florentine philosopher.²⁹ In a letter to his friend and follower Giovanni Cavalcanti, Ficino explains the positive effects of hymn-singing as an antidote against melancholy. By addressing hymns of recantation to Saturn, the planet deemed responsible for triggering black bile and a state of depression, Ficino and his interlocutor believe that the soul can be turned toward God and away from the lesser elements afflicting the body.³⁰ As can be learned from these letters, Ficino's hymns are to be taken as an attempt at rediscovering ancient hymns as religious experiences and spiritual exercises, the purpose of which – in line with Plato's philosophy – is turning the human soul away from the multiplicity of the bodily prison toward her archetypical counterpart, which is thought to reside in the intelligible world.

This practice may seem strange to a modern reader. However, Ficino's use of hymns as performative and meditative prayers is rooted in the philosopher's exegetical context. Along with the collection of hymns attributed to the mythical poet Orpheus, which had been widely circulating in manuscript form since 1424 until their first printed edition in 1501, as well as Plotinus' *Enneads*, Ficino's views on the nature of prayer were also inspired by Proclus (412–485 AD). Besides authoring treatises and commentaries on Plato, Proclus also distinguished

²⁷ MARSILIO FICINO, *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, Shephard-Walwin, London 2018, vol. I.116, p. 148–151.

²⁸ On the rediscovery and editorial history of the Orphic hymns, see DANIEL P. WALKER, « Orpheus the Theologian and Renaissance Platonists », *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 16/1–2 (1953), p. 103–104.

²⁹ ANGELA VOSS, *Marsilio Ficino*, North Atlantic Books, Berkeley 2006, p. 59–60.

³⁰ VOSS, *Marsilio Ficino*, p. 65.

himself as a composer of hymns.³¹ Proclus thought that in his dialogues *Phaedrus* and *Parmenides* Plato himself had envisioned philosophy as a form of hymn-singing, by which he meant a form of meditative prayer, the goal of which is turning the human soul toward the cosmic intelligences.³² Proclus' views on the performance of hymns were closely related with his general conceptions regarding the position of human beings in the cosmos. More optimistic interpreters of Plato, such as Plotinus, had argued that human beings could aspire to lift their minds to the sphere of Intellect (*nous*) without the need of intermediaries. Proclus, on the contrary, argued that a wide gap existed between the human soul and the sphere of the Intellect, so that humans could aspire to reunite themselves with the One (*henosis*) only by means of apposite ceremonies and invocations addressed to higher gods (*theurgia*).³³ And since the will of the gods, according to Neoplatonic ethics, cannot be moved by human prayers, Proclus' hymns were not petitions but meditations, by which the soul can convert (*epistrophe*) away from the material world and return to its heavenly homeland.³⁴ For Proclus, and consequently for Ficino, praying was thus a central exercise in an authentic philosophical life, and the hymn was the archetypal form of this spiritual practice.

Rooted in Proclus' writings, Ficino's revival of ancient hymns in a dominantly Christian context constituted a bold and, to a certain extent, unacceptable, innovation. Indeed, during the Middle Ages a small selection of Orpheus' hymns had not only been available, but were also the object of theological and historical speculations. Early Church Fathers had managed to present Orpheus as a follower of Moses in Egypt, as well as a man whose descent into the underworld prefigured Christ's death and resurrection, and whose works had a grasp on true faith.³⁵ Medieval readers, moreover, would have been familiar with the Neoplatonic hymns found in Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, and the central role these prayers play in Lady Philosophy's attempt at rescuing her devotee's soul from the spiritual and physical chains of prison and exile. Once they were rediscovered in the fifteenth century, however, the hymns of Orpheus, Proclus, Homer, and Callimachus would have been at odds with dominant views concerning the scope and purpose of prayers. According to Thomas Aquinas, invocations addressed to deities other than God, besides violating the first commandment, were incompatible with Christian prayer.³⁶ By praying, Thomas contended, humans should strive to actively cooperate with the unfolding of an

³¹ WALKER, « Orpheus the Theologian and Renaissance Platonist », p. 104–108.

³² ROBERT VAN DEN BERG, *Proclus' Hymns: Essays, Translations, Commentary*, Brill, Leiden 2001, p. 24–26.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 70–76.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 33–84, 87–88.

³⁵ JOHN B. FRIEDMAN, *Orpheus in the Middle Ages*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1970, p. 13–37.

³⁶ WALKER, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, p. 137.

otherwise immutable divine plan; in doing so, therefore, only God should be the petitioner's addressee.³⁷ Secondly, and in a way that intentionally evoked the works of Augustine, Aquinas claimed that there was only limited space for innovation in the formulation of prayers, which should always be modeled on Scriptures, and more precisely on the petitions found in the Lord's Prayer and Christ's Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane.³⁸ The adoption of pre-Christian hymns – which distinctively open with invocations addressed to a god that was conceptualized as the personification of a natural phenomenon or abstract philosophical concept – was thus in conflict with dominant views on prayer.

As Copenhaver has persuasively demonstrated, in *De Vita* Ficino was well aware of Aquinas' views on prayer.³⁹ As far as hymns are concerned, however, one should consider that he lived in a period of relative openness to liturgical innovations. Based on a better knowledge of classical Latin, and in response to the ongoing reform of the Liturgical Calendar, for example, Renaissance humanists often denounced the linguistic awkwardness and metrical clumsiness of traditional Christian hymns.⁴⁰ The need for new collections of rhetorically elaborate prayers, which explored Christian spirituality through classical imagery and meters, resulted in the composition of numerous collections of prayers such as Giovanni Pontano's *De Laudibus Divinis* and, even more systematically, Ludovico Lazzarelli's *Fasti Christianae Religionis* or Baptista Mantuanus' *De Sacris Diebus*.⁴¹ These experiments culminated during the papacy of Pope Leo X, a descendant of Cosimo and Lorenzo de Medici, who entrusted Zaccaria Ferreri (1479–1523) with the composition of a new, humanistically crafted Hymnal, which was printed posthumously in 1525 during the papacy of Clement VII.⁴² During this short, yet incredibly prolific, period brusquely interrupted by the rise of the Lutheran schism and the subsequent Catholic response, therefore, Christian liturgy witnessed a series of attempted innovations and reforms, which the Council of Trent irremediably rejected.⁴³ Besides being closely related to a context open to liturgical experimentation, Ficino's adoption

³⁷ COREY BARNES, « Thomas Aquinas on Christ's Prayer », in ed. HAMMERLING, *A History of Prayer*, p. 325–326.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 329–334.

³⁹ BRIAN P. COPENHAVER, « Scholastic Philosophy and Renaissance Magic in the *De vita* of Marsilio Ficino », *Renaissance Quarterly*, 37/4 (1984), p. 523–554.

⁴⁰ ANN MOSS, « Latin Liturgical Hymns », *Humanistica Lovaniensia: Journal of Neo-Latin Studies*, 40 (1991), p. 73–111, 75–79.

⁴¹ ISABELLE PANTIN, *La poésie du ciel en France dans la seconde moitié du seizième siècle*, Dröz, Genève 1995 (Travaux d'humanisme et Renaissance, 297), p. 245–249; Moss, « Latin Liturgical Hymns », p. 79–87.

⁴² MOSS, « Latin Liturgical Hymns », p. 82–83.

⁴³ GIORGIO CARVALE, *Forbidden Prayer: Church Censorship and Devotional Literature in Renaissance Italy*, Ashgate, Burlington 2011, p. 225–244.

of pre-Christian hymns as instruments of meditation might also stem from the type of prayer on which he focused.

Differently from Aquinas, Ficino intentionally focused on meditative, rather than petitionary, prayers. In *Three Books on Life*, for instance, Ficino discussed a number of practices by which men of learning can realign their souls with the heavens by means of acts of contemplation, the ultimate goal of which is to prepare the operator's body and soul to achieve communion with God.⁴⁴ Thus, hymns and prayers are carefully distinguished from incantations (*cantiones*), by which Ficino meant petitions to alternative intelligences that some could call to act directly, and thus blasphemously, upon things.⁴⁵ Whether these restrictions, as Walker argued, stemmed from Ficino's attempted apology of his magic or – as Robichaud has clearly demonstrated – from his Neoplatonic sources, it should be taken into account that meditative prayers in general are more open to innovations than other types of prayer.⁴⁶ Psychologists of religion, in particular, have often emphasized how meditative prayers are characterized by a distinctive combination of methodological rigor and spontaneity. Open to innovation and intended to recreate the presence of God in the subject's soul, meditative prayers are marked by a lack of uniformity found, for instance, in the more formulaic and standardized language that members of a priestly class impose upon ritualistic prayers.⁴⁷ Once adopted as a form of meditation, therefore, the theurgical hymns found or mentioned in pre-Christian sources could be perceived as spiritual exercises perfectly compatible with a Christian outlook that was open, especially during the late fifteenth century, to a relative degree of religious inclusivism.⁴⁸

III. *Early Success of Hymns: The Case of Michele Marullo Tarcaniota*

Although short-lived and in many respects unique, Ficino's context witnessed a spectacular revival of theurgical hymns as a form of meditative prayer. Independently from Ficino, but in response to very similar late ancient sources, Greek émigré and controversial philosopher Plethon (1355–1454) had already advocated a similar adoption of hymn-singing as a meditative practice intended to mold the imagination of the subject to receive its divine counterpart, thus triggering a process of spiritual transformation.⁴⁹ In 1486, at the time of his failed

⁴⁴ MARSILIO FICINO, *Three Books of Life*, ed. KAROL KASKE, JOHN R. CLARK, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, Tempe 1994, p. 355–363; WALKER, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, p. 149.

⁴⁵ FICINO, *Three Books of Life*, p. 307, 355; WALKER, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, p. 44.

⁴⁶ ALLAN H. COLE, « Prayer », in DAVID ADAMS LEEMING et al. (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion*, Blanton Peale, New York 2009, vol. I, p. 1372.

⁴⁷ MICHAEL ARGYLE, *Psychology and Religion: An Introduction*, Routledge, New York 2000, p. 95–96.

⁴⁸ For an overview, see MATTEO SORANZO, « Concordance et différence religieuse », in KUSHNER (ed.), *L'époque de la Renaissance (1400–1600)*, p. 7–19.

⁴⁹ WALKER, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, p. 61.

attempt to bring forth a project of theological reform in front of a group of doctors gathered in Rome during the papacy of Innocent VIII, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola planned to dedicate part of his nine hundred conclusions to Orphic Hymns with the declared intention of stimulating the minds of contemplative souls.⁵⁰ The subjective and transformative virtues of hymn singing, moreover, played a central role in Lazzarelli's *Crater Hermetis* – a dialogue set at the court of the King of Naples in which the listeners' minds are progressively transformed and made suitable to receive the author's secret knowledge.⁵¹ The author that best exemplifies the literary offspring of this influential moment in Early Modern spirituality, however, is Michele Marullo Tarcaniota (1458–1500), a Greek émigré and the author of a collection of twenty hymns entitled *Natural Hymns* (*Hymni Naturales*). The collection was finalized in Ficino's Florence and first printed on November 26, 1497.⁵²

From its division into four books to the subject of each individual text, Marullo's hymns constitute a long spiritual exercise based on Ficino's particular form of Neoplatonism. The structure of the collection, for example, mirrors Ficino's well-known commentary on Plato's *Symposium*, which explains that the light of the eternal One radiates through the medium of four hypostases, which are called respectively Intellect or Angelic Mind, World Soul, Nature, and the Elemental Forms or Matter.⁵³ While acknowledging Ficino's impact on Marullo's collection, Donatella Coppini has argued that, by situating a tragic hymn to all-devouring Earth at the end of his collection, Marullo would have poetically challenged Ficino's philosophical system based on the authority of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*.⁵⁴ Charles Fantazzi, on the other hand, has recently contended that Ficino's cosmology – together with those found in Proclus, Orpheus, and other late antique sources – resides at the very core of the *Natural Hymns*, which occasionally incorporate concepts and images borrowed from Lucretius without endorsing the pessimism of the Roman Epicurean.⁵⁵ As Valery Rees has recently argued, however, one has to acknowledge that the macro-text of Marullo's collection is modeled on a hierarchical organization of Neoplatonic hypostases outlined in Ficino's works. Consistent with Ficino's metaphysical hierarchy, the first book is devoted to God's intellectual manifestations at the level of Intellect,

⁵⁰ FRANCES A. YATES, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*, Routledge, London 1979, p. 20–22.

⁵¹ MATTEO SORANZO, « A New Look at Spirituality », p. 185–209. In addressing Lazzarelli, this article builds on the work of Claudio Moreschini and Wouter J. Hanegraaff.

⁵² This incunabulum comprises Marullo's epigram and natural hymns and was printed by the Societas Colubris in Florence.

⁵³ MARSILIO FICINO, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium*, ed. JAYNE SEARS REYNOLDS, Spring, Dallas 1985, p. 47.

⁵⁴ MARULLUS, *Inni naturali*, ed. DONATELLA COPPINI, Le Lettere, Florence 1995 (Il nuovo melograno, 21), p. 11, 228, 263.

⁵⁵ MARULLUS, *Poems*, ed. CHARLES FANTAZZI, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2012, xiii.

which articulates into the twofold triads of Jupiter, Pallas, Love, and Angels, Eternity, and Bacchus. As it moves onto the reason-principles residing in the World Soul, the second book comprises prayers addressed to Pan, Heaven, Stars, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, and Venus. The third book, which corresponds to the rational seeds inhabiting Nature, includes prayers addressed to the Sun and the Moon, which lead the reader to the body of the world and its corresponding elemental forms chanted in the hymns to Aether, Jupiter, Juno, Ocean, and Earth, which are conveniently placed in the fourth and final book.⁵⁶

Despite their conspicuous adaptation of Neoplatonic themes, it might seem unusual to approach Marullo's *Natural Hymns* as philosophical texts. If a claim to knowledge is to be found in this text, it is one grounded in the subject's experience of spiritual transformation, rather than in more conventionally philosophical discursive practices such as syllogistic arguments or propositional knowledge. Modern readers might dismiss Marullo's prayers as literary fictions or 'thoughtless acts'. Once examined in its context, however, the collection displays the features of a spiritual exercise in Neoplatonic meditation. In line with the Stoic tradition of *apatheia*, *Natural Hymns* stages a poetic *persona* progressively detached from the inexorable laws of nature who experiences a specific state of consciousness, which has the features of what Hadot described as « view from above ».⁵⁷ Enclosed within the collection's Neoplatonic structure, Marullo narrates the experience of his own *epistrophe*, which – as for Proclus – is the result of the twenty meditative prayers found in his collection.

A representative instance of language of experiential knowledge is the final hymn to all-devouring Earth. This text is better understood as the result of the transformation described in the collection as a whole, rather than an allusion to Lucretius' tragic view of nature often emphasized by scholars. In a way that recalls Proclus' hymn-singing philosophy and the aforementioned declarations found in Ficino's *Three Books on Life*, elsewhere in the collection Marullo clearly distinguishes his hymns from petitionary prayers and superstitious invocations intended to change the laws of a necessarily ordained cosmos: « Why, therefore, do we din our inert refrains into the ears of the gods night and day, in vain, and harass Jupiter, who laughs at our prayers and our useless laments ».⁵⁸

On the other hand, Marullo's hymns should not be interpreted – as some critics have done in the past – as some sort of pagan re-enactment foreshadowing the numerous experiments of this kind that characterize modern European

⁵⁶ VALERY REES, « A Sojourner in Florence: Neoplatonic Themes in the *Hymni naturales* of Marullus », *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini*, 16 (2018), p. 559–570.

⁵⁷ HADOT, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, p. 238–250.

⁵⁸ MARULLUS, *Poems* 2.2, p. 226–227, l. 17–20: « Nam cur interti numina nenia | et nocte frustra obtundimus et die | Iovemque ridentem precesque | totque supervacuas querelas? » The translation is Fantazzi's.

history.⁵⁹ Theurgic prayers, in fact, had played a central role not only among leading Neoplatonists like Proclus, but also in Christian works such as, for instance, pseudo-Dionysius the Aeropagite's *On Divine Names*. Like Proclus' hymns, Marullo's philosophical prayers are meant to trigger the subject's *epistrophe* toward the One. As in the pseudo-Dionysius, moreover, the One is conceived as unreachable and theologians, just like poets, are left striving to capture its essence by means of metaphors and conjectures.⁶⁰ Transported by his verses, the poetic *persona* inscribed in the *Natural Hymns* experiences an upward process of conversion, which runs opposite to the downward emanation of God's light through the four hypostases. It is because of this transformation that, in the final hymn, the poet can look at the world of mortals as if looking at it from above:

As a last labor the goddess Earth also must rightly be the subject of my song – last, but worthy by her merits of being awarded the first honors. Tower-bearing, fecund, powerful, whom the ancients consecrated with the name of Great Mother, as the inner sanctum of her temple reveals, whether because from her comes the diligent race of men, from her wild beasts and the verdant grassess of the fields, and the woods that cover the heights of Mt. Taygetus, and the pine groves of spiny Mt. Lycaeus, where every race of living creatures lives and increases, each according to its kind [...]⁶¹

Announced in the first hymn and distributed throughout the entire collection, the spiritual transformation narrated in Marullo's collection is best exemplified by the hymn to Bacchus found at the end of the first book. Scholars have often been puzzled by this prayer and tried to resolve it by proposing numerous, and often contrasting, allegorical interpretations. According to Benedetto Soldati, for example, Marullo's Bacchus would be an allegory of divine justice, while for Francesco Tateo the god of wine would refer to eternal youth as a terrestrial

⁵⁹ According to an authoritative group of scholars, Renaissance paganism would be a nineteenth century cliché, rather than an actual historical phenomenon. On this problem see PAUL O. KRISTELLER, *Renaissance Thought and its Sources*, Columbia University Press, New York 1979, p. 66–81; JOHN MONFASANI, « Platonic Paganism in the Fifteenth Century », in CESARE DI MAIO (ed.), *Reconsidering the Renaissance*, Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, New York 1992, p. 45–61.

⁶⁰ Pseudo-Dionysius' view of theology had obvious applications to poetry, which were well known since the Middle Ages. A noteworthy example is Dante's *Paradiso*, as discussed for instance in VITTORIO MONTEMAGGI, « In Unknowability as Love: the Theology of Dante's *Commedia* », in Id. et al. (eds.), *Dante's Commedia: Theology as Poetry*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame 2010, p. 60–94.

⁶¹ MARULLUS, *Poems* 4.5, p. 308–309, l. 1–8: « Extrema est dea Terra mihi quoque iure canenda, | Ultima, sed meritis quae primos aequet honores: | Turriferens, foecunda, potens, quam nomine Magnae | Sacrarunt veteres adyto monstrante Parentis, | Sive quod inde hominum gnatum genus, inde ferarum, | Quaeque virent campis herbae, quaeque ardua sylvae | Taygeta horrentisque tenent pineta Lycae, | Unde animale genus generatim vivit adauctum [...] »

counterpart of Eternity. For Cesare Goffis, who first emphasized Marullo's knowledge of Lucretius, Bacchus would be a personification of nature and its irresistible forces, while for Jacques Chomarat and Walter Ludwig – both of whom were inclined toward a Christian interpretation of the collection – the ancient god would stand for the manifestation of God in history or the Holy Spirit's transformative impact upon the soul of humans.⁶² These different interpretations nonetheless share a common methodology (or assumption), namely that Marullo's collection is a work of literature, albeit one charged with classical allusions and hidden allegorical meanings. If approached as an instance of language of experiential knowledge, by which the author prepares his soul to receive an absolute, non-discursive knowledge, Marullo's hymn to Bacchus is a document of the experimentation and pluralism that characterize Early Modern European religions and spirituality. The imagery, rhythms, and references found in Marullo's hymn can be interpreted as meditative practices, the purpose of which is to rouse the poet's mind from its bodily prison towards heavenly contemplation.

For Neoplatonists and Ficino, Bacchus / Dionysus had already been transformed into a cosmological or spiritual allegory linked to a process of spiritual transformation. In his hymns to Helios and Athena, for example, Proclus had recounted the myth of Dionysus' dismemberment and eventual rebirth as an allegory of the division of the cosmos and the distribution of its elements. In doing so, he interpreted this process as the cosmic counterpart of the philosopher's conversion.⁶³ Plotinus, moreover, interpreted this myth as a parable of the soul's fall from the unity of the intellect into the multiplicity of material reality. For Plotinus, Dionysian frenzy is the soul's desire to escape the bodily prison and return to its metaphysical abode.⁶⁴ Ficino, moreover, systematized these Neoplatonic motifs in his famous *argumenta* attached to Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Ion*, in which he described the soul's conversion away from the multiplicity of bodily senses toward the reunion with the One as an ascent

⁶² BENEDETTO SOLDATI, *La poesia astrologica nel Quattrocento: ricerche e studi*, Le Lettere, Florence 1986, p. 275; CESARE GOFFIS, « Il sincretismo lucreziano-platonico negli *Hymni naturales* del Marullo », *Belfagor*, 24 (1960), p. 386–417; FRANCESCO TATEO, *Tradizione e realtà nell'umanesimo italiano*, Dedalo Libri, Bari 1969, p. 129–219; WALTHER LUDWIG, « Antike Götter und christlicher Glaube. Die *Hymni naturales* von Marullo », in *Berichte aus den Sitzungen der Joachim Jungius Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften E. V.*, Hamburg, Verlag Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Hamburg 1992, p. 68.

⁶³ VAN DEN BERG, *Proclus' Hymns*, p. 170–74, 280–281.

⁶⁴ PLOTINUS, *Enneads* 1.6.5, trans. STEPHEN MACKENNA, Penguin, London 1991, p. 39: « What do you feel in presence of the grace you discern in actions, in manners, in sound morality, in all the works and fruits of virtue, in the beauty of souls? When you see that you yourselves are beautiful within, what do you feel? What is this Dionysiac exultation that thrills through your being, this straining upwards of all your Soul, this longing to break away from the body and live sunken within the veritable self? ».

upon a four-tiered hierarchy consisting of Poetic (Muses), Mysteric (Bacchus), Prophetic (Apollo), and Erotic (Venus) frenzies.⁶⁵ Building creatively on these precedents, Marullo's hymn to Bacchus is fittingly situated at the end of the first book, which symbolically marks the boundary between Ficino's first and second frenzy, as well as the boundary between the spheres of Intellect and World Soul. Framed in the context of Marullo's collection as a whole, in other words, Bacchus constitutes the first step in the poet's spiritual transformation.

Carried away by the frantic rhythm and lists of appellations that characterize Marullo's prayer, readers are invited to create a parallel between the poet and humankind in general. The poet's *persona*, whose condition of political exile is often used as a cipher of human existence as an exile from the eternal One, manifests his desire to run into pathless woods and join the Bacchantes in their never-ending dances, even howling 'Euoe!' together with the deity's raptured disciples:

Come now, Muses, sing to me of father Bromius, fiery offspring of Jupiter, whom the good Semele brought forth, the boy distinguished by his locks and his radiant eyes. Euoe! My breast sends forth a sound emanating from a frenzied rage and my soul, overflowing with the god, is shaken. Euoe! give me the cymbals, give me the plaintive horns, and may a headband of vipers gird my youthful locks, my locks adorned with ivy, fluttering in the breeze, and in my train may a thousand Edonian women follow after, their sacred feet trembling, with shrill ululations and dancing the wild tripudium, violently shaking their ferine heads under powerful thyrsus, while the rider on his stooped mount repeats the cry 'euoe'!⁶⁶

Possessed by the god, dragged into restless dances and orgiastic ceremonies, forced into a hallucinatory prayer of thanksgiving voiced under Bacchus' influence, the poet presents himself as a symbol of humankind's earthly imprisonment and constant desire to return to the heavenly residence.

But I myself, wandering aimlessly, gasping for breath, led on by overpowering feelings, totally filled with a new spirit, press forward into the pathless woodlands, celebrating the orgies of Bacchus with piercing shrieks, the secret orgia hidden

⁶⁵ WOUTER J. HANEGRAAFF, « The Platonic Frenzies in Marsilio Ficino », in JITSE H. F. DIJKSTRA et al. (eds.), *Myths, Martyrs, and Modernity: Studies in the History of Religions in Honour of Jan N. Bremmer*, Brill, Leiden 2010 (Numen Book Series: Studies in the History of Religions, 127), p. 553–567.

⁶⁶ MARULLUS, *Poems* 1.6.1–12, p. 212–215: « Agedum, canite patrem, Thespiades, mihi Bromium, | sobolem igneam Iovis, quem peperit bona Semele | puerum coma praesignem et radiantibus oculis. | Euoe! sonant furenti mihi pectora rabie | nimioque deo plenus concutitur gravis animus. | Euoe! date cymbalum huc, huc date cornua querula, | cingat virentem mihi taenia viperea comam, | comam diffusam animis Aeoliis hederigeram | quam hinc mille secutae atque illinc trepidante pede sacro, | ululent citatis Edonides usque tripudiis | valido sub thyrsio iacientes vi capita fera, | Euoe! sessore pandi geminante quadrupedis ».

away in a venerated basket, which you would try to touch in vain without a sacred initiation, or without having received nine times the sacred waters of transparent Castalia.⁶⁷

Rather than a declaration of poetics confined to the domain of literature, the poet's description of himself as wandering through the forest guided by Bacchus' frenzy and reviving ancient rituals with the help of poetry is best understood as a dramatic representation of human existence and its authentic spiritual vocation, which the recitation of hymns contributes to awaken. Besides being a tribute to Orphic hymns and their characteristic lists of appellations and epithets such as 'two horned king,' 'satyr,' 'nocturnal,' and 'multiform', Marullo's hymn narrates a gradual movement away from the countless features attributed to Bacchus, toward the discovery of this god's authentic meaning as the organizing principle of the universe – a discovery that, as an illumination, readers can find in the prayer to thanksgiving on which the poem ends:

[...] you balance the weight of the world machine and suspend the earth in the middle of the air in a firm position. Through you we inhabit the remote heights of the heavens, our heavy hearts cheered with too much nectar, you allow us to take our places at the tables of the gods. Hail, benignant source of light, father of gods and men, in your benevolence give aid to those who piously celebrate your mysteries, together with your love one, good Themis. Themis surrounded by the dancing choruses of the Corycian nymphs.⁶⁸

IV. *Christianization or Domestication?*

Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola and Natale Conti on Hymns

Early Modern religious pluralism should not be construed as an idyllic model of peaceful integration of differences. Polemics, disagreement, and polarization, on the contrary, characterize the ways in which European subjects negotiated their religious identities by choosing or rejecting options (e.g. Neoplatonism, Hermeticism etc.) available within their respective religious traditions (Judaism, Islam etc.), while at the same time declaring their affiliation with different institutions of learning (e.g. Universities, monastic or humanistic *studia*, princely

⁶⁷ Ibid. 1.6.13–18, p. 214–215: « At ipse vagus, anhelans, animo duce nimio, | Totus noua plenus mente, per auia nemora | Orgia praecedam acutis celebrans ululatus, | Orgia verendis arcana recondita calathis, | Penitus quae sanctis frustra captes sine initiis, | Nouies perpepus sacra Castalidos vada vitreae ».

⁶⁸ Ibid. 1.6.53–61, p. 217: « tu libras pondera machinae | medioque terram suspendis in aere stabilem, | per te remota coeli procul ardua colimus, | nimio diffusi praecordia nectare gravia, | tu das deorum sanctis accumbere dapibus. | Salve, benigne lychnita, deum et pater hominum, | animoque dexter tua mystica rite colentibus | adsis, tuis non sine amoribus et Themide bona, | Themide nympharum stipata Coricidum choris ».

courts, literary academies, etc.) and preferences for different and, often, competing claims to knowledge.⁶⁹ Acceptance or rebuttal of what Robert Bellah, in his influential essay on the religions of Italy, called the 'ground bass' of pre-Christian religions, for instance, is one among many long-lasting options available in the constitution of a religious identity not only in the Early Modern period, but well into the civic rituals and political religions of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe.⁷⁰ If one contrasts, for instance, the dramatically different perceptions of ancient prayers and rituals adopted, for instance, by Roman Cardinal and Augustinian Hermit Giles of Viterbo (1472–1532) with the stark exclusivism of Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498), it is evident how individual approaches to what is polemically, and somewhat misleadingly, designated as paganism, are defining identity markers.⁷¹ Polemics, polarization, and different attitudes in regards to the alterity of non-Christian prayers, as the cases of Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533) and Natale Conti (1520–1582) illustrate, characterize the reception of Neoplatonic hymns in the aftermath of Ficino.

If Marullo's *Natural Hymns* enthusiastically followed Ficino's adoption of ancient hymns as instruments of meditation and divine intercession, at the same time this practice could be controversial. Ten years after the publication of Marullo's poetic work, Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola, himself a prolific composer of hymns in elegant Latin hexameters, voiced a widespread criticism of the overwhelming presence of ancient mythology in early sixteenth-century literature.⁷² In order to contrast such a trend, in 1507 the humanist published a collection of three hymns known as *Hymni heroici tres*. Pico's hymns, dedicated respectively to the Trinity, Jesus Christ, and the Virgin Mary, were supposed to act as a counter-chant to what the author perceived as an overwhelming wave of paganizing poetry. In the short dedication to the author's young son Thomas, Gianfrancesco stated that indignation was at the origin of the project. He was inspired to undertake it after having witnessed too many contemporaries

⁶⁹ VON STUCKRAD, *Locations of Knowledge*, p. 19–20; GIOVANNI FILORAMO, « Religious Pluralism and Crises of Identity », *Diogenes*, 50/3 (2003), p. 31–44.

⁷⁰ ROBERT N. BELLAH, PHILIP E. HAMMOND, *Varieties of Civil Religion*, Harper and Row, San Francisco 1980, p. 90–94.

⁷¹ MATTEO SORANZO, *Poetry and Identity in Quattrocento Naples*, Ashgate, Farnham 2014, p. 117–141; ID., « Exploring the Forests of Antiquity: the Golden Bough and Early Modern Spirituality », in BILL GLADHILL, MICAH MYERS (eds.), *Walking Through Elysium: Aeneid 6 and Its Cultural Reception*, Toronto University Press, Toronto 2019, p. 77–93.

⁷² CLAUDIO MORESCHINI, *Rinascimento cristiano. Innovazioni e riforma religiosa nell'Italia del Quindicesimo e Sedicesimo secolo*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma 2017, p. 163–218; MATTEO SORANZO, « Un'identità religiosa nel primo Cinquecento: gli *Hymni Heroici Tres* di Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola », *Italian Studies*, 70/1 (2015), p. 53–75. See also MARCO PIANA, « *Fallax Antiquitas*: Gianfrancesco Pico Della Mirandola's Critique of Antiquity », Ph.D. Diss., McGill University 2018.

addressing hymns to Pan, Hera, Venus, and other false deities with a zeal that surpassed, in his view, that of the ancient pagans themselves. Like Ficino, Marullo, and their Neoplatonic predecessors, Gianfrancesco did acknowledge the necessity of singing hymns to relax the mind and prepare it for receiving divine mysteries. In Gianfrancesco's view, however, pagan gods were nothing but demons in disguise, who could take possession of the softened minds of whoever would address them with prayers:

I saw that numerous poets of our time are corrupting all things: they address their prayers to Pan, Earth and Venus under the image of nature. They invoke all the gods and goddesses, draw down the spirits of stars, conjure up ghosts and summon the dead, performing pagan rituals with more zeal than the pagans themselves. So, I decided that it was no more acceptable for young students to swallow, under the pretext of elegance and erudition, the venom of a false religion covered, as it were, in honey. And above all, I wanted to warn you against this danger.⁷³

Consistent with these premises, Gianfrancesco Pico's self-annotated *Hymni heroici tres* foreshadowed three tendencies in the reception of this important aspect of Ficino's influence on Early Modern prayer. First of all, in each of the proems of his collection of hymns and the long annotations added to the first edition, Gianfrancesco, consistent with Thomas Aquinas and his condemnation of invocations addressed to pagan gods, harshly rejects the pseudo-Dionysian idea that divine names are attributes of the only true God. According to the author, hymns should be addressed only to conventionally Christian interlocutors such as the Trinity, Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the sanctioned angels and saints.⁷⁴

This position, which Gianfrancesco embraced in his own production of hymns, is exemplified in the opening poem of his collection, a long hymn to the Holy Trinity. The poem opens with a long rebuttal of pagan imagery and models, which Gianfrancesco labels as Satan's tools made to distract humans from the divine truth.⁷⁵ Modeling his poetic persona on Moses, the author adopts the

⁷³ GIANFRANCESCO PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Hymni Heroici Tres*, Minutianum, Milan 1507, fol. 1r: « Itaque conspicatus a plerisque nostre tempestatis fedari omnia sub naturae velamine Pana, Tellurem, Venerem invocari et deos deasque omnes accersiri, et animas a stellis derivari et umbras elici et manes evocari et deos gentium in presentia magis quam a gentibus ipsis celebrari dissimulandum amplius non putavi ne sacris litteris parum eruditi adulescentes sub comptae et eruditae linguae praetextum quasi melle illita falsae religionis venena deglutiant et in primis te periculi huius non mediocris admonitum volui ».

⁷⁴ Ibid., fol. 1.

⁷⁵ Ibid., fol. 3v–4v: « Summe parens rerum qui vastas flectis habenas | orbis et eterno dispensas omnia nutu, | da, precor, optatas edenda in carmina vires. | Non tamen Auratam Pellem de Phasidis ora | poscimus antiqua Minyarum avertere puppi, | non Laertiaden, Pelideae aut gesta ferocis | non Thebas, profugumque ducem phrygiosque nepotes | tollere mendaci suprema ad sydera cantu; | nec iam Threicio libamina dicta poetae | non Cyreneo laudes effundere plectro, |

structure of the ancient hymn only to replace its idolatrous contents with the stories of the Bible.⁷⁶ The hymn to the Trinity retells the history of creation to emphasize the rupture between humans and Nature that followed the Fall, presenting the transformation of natural phenomena into gods as the result of a demonic conspiracy against God and humankind. Consequently, the composition of Christian hymns is aligned with the history of Redemption, as the poet presents himself as actively collaborating with Christ's redemptive mission.⁷⁷

Pico's poems had little success in Italy, grounded as they were in the author's personal acquaintance with Girolamo Savonarola and the Florentine current of intransigent Christians known as *Piagnoni*. Gianfrancesco's take on hymns, however, had long-lasting success on the other side of the Alps.⁷⁸ Along with Erasmus of Rotterdam and Joseph Scaliger – who both despised contemporary revivals of hymns addressed to pagan gods and harshly criticized this aspect of Marullo's poetry – even John Milton might have been acquainted with Pico's poetical works, as Blossom Feinstein has persuasively argued.⁷⁹ Despite the

nec Salaminici numerosa precamina vatis; | non quae Trinacriae cantavit rustica Musa, | non quae ad Olympiacae quinquennia praemia palmae | concinuit Dircaea chelys defensa per ignes ». [Highest father of things, who hold the vast reins of the world and provide all things with your eternal will, give me, I pray you, the strength I desire for composing my poem. But I am not asking you to transport once again the Golden Fleece from the banks of the Phasis river on the Mynians' boat, nor to extol to the skies Odysseus, Achilles' fierce deeds, Thebes, the wandering king and the Phrygian descendents with mendacious verses; nor what the Sicilian Muse sang, the countless prayers of the poet of Salamis and those that the Dircean lyre sang every five years in honor of the Olympic winner].

⁷⁶ Ibid., fol. 6v–7r: « Dic mihi sacratis radiatus tempora Moses | cornibus, unde uni famulatur et infimus orbis | et summus? Tibi namque patet quem fumida nubes | conclusit, postquam turba comitante fideli | difrjciens virga fluctus Rubri Aequoris altos | duxisti solido vestigia sicca profundo. | Inde per arentes arabum tentoria ampos | liquisti aerio considens vertice Synae | colloquioque fruens metuendi principis, illo | contentus gustu ieiunia longa tulisti | et Christo assidens praecelsi montis amoeni | vertice de liquida potas mysteria nube ». [Tell me, Moses, glowing with your sacred horns: why do the lowest and highest spheres obey one principle? You know it well: a cloud of smoke was shrouding you, when you, parted the water of the Red Sea with your staff and marched with your followers on the bottom of the sea without getting your feet wet. Then you left the camps scattered in the Arabian desert and sat on the windy top of Sinai: conversing with the awesome Prince, you fasted for a long time, feeding only on that flavor. Sitting with Christ on the sunny top of the mountain, you drink in mysteries from that limpid cloud].

⁷⁷ MORESCHINI, *Rinascimento Cristiano*, p. 163–218; SORANZO, « Un'identità religiosa », p. 68–70; PIANA, « *Fallax Antiquitas* », p. 142–148.

⁷⁸ On this subject, see STEVEN ROWAN, GERHILD SCHOLZ WILLIAMS, « Jacob Spiegel on Gianfrancesco Pico and Reuchlin: Poetry, Scholarship and Politics in Germany in 1512 », *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance*, 44/2 (1982), p. 291–305. See also PIANA, « *Fallax Antiquitas* », p. 73–77.

⁷⁹ BLOSSOM FEINSTEIN, « On the Hymns of John Milton and Gian Francesco Pico », *Comparative Literature*, 20/3 (1968), p. 245–253. Erasmus' critique of Marullo is found in his 1524 letter to Haio Herman; see *The Correspondence of Erasmus (Letters 1356–1534)*, trans. ROGER AUBREY BASKERVILLE MYNORS, ALEXANDER DALZELL, Toronto University Press, Toronto 1992, p. 344. As for Scaliger, his

modest success of Pico's hymns in Italian lands, his lesson was received by a few select poets, among which we find Giano Vitale (1485/90–1559 ca.). Following in Pico's footsteps, the Sicilian poet composed several religiously sound hymns in elegant humanistic Latin. In 1516, for example, Vitale printed a first collection of three hymns entitled *In Divos Archangelos Hymni*. The collection consisted of three prayers to the archangels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, dedicated respectively to Antonio Nerli, Girolamo Vida and Alberto III, prince of Carpi, who were prominent followers of Pope Leo X and members of the Medici's entourage in Rome. This work was soon followed by Vitale's *In Divinam Trinitatem Hymni Tres* printed in 1517, which is a collection of new hymns dedicated to other illustrious followers of Leo X such as Pietro Bembo (1470–1547), and Jacopo Sadoletto (1477–1547). Presented as the work of a Christian *vates* enlightening Orpheus' hymns with Christian truth, Vitale's hymns are meant to constitute the liturgical counterpart of the classicizing reform of Roman Catholic liturgy pursued by the Medici popes Leo X and Clement VII.⁸⁰

Intransigent Christians recurrently complained about the widespread use of pagan imagery in the literature of the time. Nevertheless, meditative and performative hymns addressed to pagan deities and personifications of philosophical and astrological concepts managed to survive even the attempted purification of the Christian message brought about by the Reformation. Besides allegory, which continued to offer a viable way for attenuating the otherness of pagan gods, a widespread tactic was a newly found interest for the form, rather than the content, of ancient prayers. Gianfrancesco Pico himself had to acknowledge that ancient hymns were still valid formal models for a reform of Christian hymns, even if they are addressed to false gods. Others argued that pagan prayers and rituals could be studied, analyzed, and formally imitated at least for scholarly purposes, so long as their addressees did not become actual objects of worship. This view was embraced by Pico's friend Lilio Giraldi, who not only composed lengthy erudite treatises on the religions of antiquity, but also actively collaborated in the publication and diffusion of Gianfrancesco Pico's works, thus showing his support for his friend's approach to ancient hymnography.⁸¹ The same fascination with ancient rituals and prayers, moreover, can be seen at work in the eccentric, yet extremely influential, *Mythologiae* (first printed 1567) composed by Natale Conti (1520–1582).

negative judgment is found in book 6 of his *Poetices libri septem*, Jean Crespin, Geneva 1561, p. 299.

⁸⁰ On Giano Vitale, see PAOLA DE CAPUA, « Tra Giano Vitale, Pietro Corsi e Niccolò Ridolfi », *Studi medievali e umanistici*, 15 (2017), p. 451–512.

⁸¹ SIMONA FOÀ, « Giraldi, Gregorio Lilio », in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, Treccani, Rome 2001, vol. 56, 452–455. See also PIANA, « *Fallax Antiquitas* », p. 166–167, 219–223.

If Ficino and Marullo found a renewed way to negotiate their religious identity and enrich their spirituality in ancient wisdom and practice, Conti's post-Tridentine approach to ancient religions and rituals oscillated between skepticism and acceptance, often softened by the use of allegory. On the one hand, Conti acknowledged that certain aspects of paganism, if properly interpreted, have the power «to raise men to the heights of celestial knowledge».⁸² On the other hand, as John Murlyan and Steven Brown have stated, Conti's attitude shifts between contempt and derision toward the presumed immorality of pagan myths and «respect for the occult wisdom contained in its narratives».⁸³ This ambivalent position is exemplified in the section on hymns of Conti's *Mythologiae* (I, 16). Written to show the simplicity of ancient people and their gods, the chapter engages with the difficult task of explaining ritual hymn-singing.⁸⁴ Based on his knowledge of the hymns of Callimachus and Orpheus, Conti describes these prayers as part of a ritual divided into two consecutive phases. First, hymns inscribe an invocation to the deity, in which the god's epithets and powers are enumerated together with the blessings he/she bestowed upon the population. Second, hymns incorporate an actual petition, which culminates in beseeching the divinity's favor.⁸⁵ In doing so, Conti projected the most controversial elements of hymn-singing upon the distant, primitive, and ultimately harmless, horizon of antiquity.

Ficino substantially emphasized the power of hymn-singing as an instrument for realigning the soul with God, a practice coherent with the purposes of a Christian life. Conti's book, on the other hand, describes hymns as one among the multiple aspects of a pagan ceremony, thus presenting the meditative properties and spiritual efficacy of these prayers as the curious output of a foreign spirituality. In these ceremonies, he states, the ancients used music «to shift the minds of those who were present there from their own thoughts to the worship of the immortal gods».⁸⁶ By setting hymn-singing in the far-away world of antiquity, or by soothing their disruptive potentials with the aid of allegory,

⁸² NATALE CONTI, *Natale Conti's Mythologiae*, trans. JOHN MULRYAN, STEVEN BROWN, ACMRS, Tempe 2006 (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 316), p. 3.

⁸³ CONTI, *Mythologiae*, p. xxxv.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 47: «Our readers might gain some profit and pleasure from a brief explanation of the different kinds of hymns employed by the ancients in their sacrifices. It would go a long way toward explaining not only the simplicity of those people, but also the nature of the gods they worshipped».

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 49: «To put it as briefly as possible, the structure of a hymn commonly consists of the following elements: a foreshadowing of the arrival of the gods through a generous display of happiness everywhere; songs sung at the altar that glorify the gods and their achievements; recollections of the favors that the gods have bestowed upon men; and finally, prayers requesting the kind and blessed attendance of the gods at the sacrifices being conducted in his honor».

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

therefore, Conti managed to create a critical distance between his world and that of this ancient devotional practice, thus adjusting Ficino's legacy to the stricter criteria of religious orthodoxy of late-sixteenth-century Europe. Rather than an ancient meditative practice to pursue and revive, in Conti's *Mythologiae* hymns are presented as the equivalent of a pagan festival or ancient practices such as display of ceremonial garlands and the performance of sacrifices.⁸⁷

As a result of Gianfrancesco Pico's early rebuttal of pagan mythology and Natale Conti's antiquarian rationalization of pre-Christian prayers, in sixteenth-century Italy the revival of meditative hymns began to develop into essentially two forms. On the one hand, Neoplatonic hymns to intermediary deities such as those found in Marullo's *Hymni Naturales* were allegedly absorbed into a Christian paradigm by substituting pagan deities with theologically acceptable addressees, such as God, Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, angels, and saints. On the other hand, despite the survival of Neoplatonic approaches to prayer, hymns became progressively relegated to the past, and were revived mostly for antiquarian interests. In both cases, however, hymns drifted away or were progressively excluded from philosophy's domain together with rituals, natural magic and the spiritual practices philosophy entailed for ancient and Renaissance authors. On the subject of Christianizing hymns, once again, Gianfrancesco Pico was at the forefront of this largely unexplored trend.

In 1531, a few years before Gianfrancesco's death, his friend Lilio Giraldi published a new edition of the three hymns composed in 1507 supplemented with ten new hymns accompanied by a dedicatory letter addressed to Neapolitan poet Jacopo Sannazaro. In this collection, Giraldi included Pico's meditative prayer addressed to his Guardian Angel, a text which adapts the structure of an Orphic hymn to a popular theme in Christian devotion with a vivid autobiographical spin. Written in the midst of the fratricidal wars that lacerated the author's family's inheritance, Pico's hymn interprets the Guardian Angel's power over the dangerous actions of demons as both a spiritual replication of Christ's Harrowing of Hell in the company of Michael, and as the soul's conversion away from the prison of the senses toward the contemplation of God:

Although the Ancient Serpent, as if repeating the ancient sin, often instills temptations and bad decisions in my heart, you still descend in the hardened soul with your constant whisper and rekindle the light of my intellect: straighten my eyes that are wandering, turn them toward the heavens as they are falling down. This way, they may get used to contemplate the eternal homeland of heaven and

⁸⁷ Ibid., 22: « During the sacrificial proceedings themselves, the victims, the altars and the men who performed the sacrifice wore garlands ». See also Ibid., 23: « Since different trees were sacred to different gods, priests decorated themselves in different types of wreaths before sacrificing to a particular god ».

write God's commands upon the heart. What is a sin, and I confess my sin, already shames me: ask the highest Father to forgive me and reunite me to him with sacred love, and may he set my heart on fire with heavenly flames.⁸⁸

Scattered with allusions to tragic events such as the siege of Mirandola and the ephemeral truce that preceded Gianfrancesco's assassination, the hymn also offers a snapshot into the tormented spirituality and demonic obsessions of this still largely unknown poet and philosopher.

V. Hymns and Spirituality at Court

So far, this essay has illustrated how the inclusion of Neoplatonic hymns among the spiritual practices adopted by Renaissance philosophers constitutes a challenge to what is conventionally meant by 'philosophy'. Ficino, Marullo, Conti, and Pico, however, would also be problematic characters in a history of Early Modern spirituality, as none of them is, for instance, affiliated with a monastic order or committed to an ascetic life solely directed to the contemplation of God. Problematic as they might be for conventional definitions of philosophy and religion, these authors are perfectly understandable in terms of what Michel Foucault, in his *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, defined as spirituality. Rather than being linked to a specific religious tradition, Foucault argued, spirituality is best understood as the « search, practice and experience through which the subject carries out the necessary transformations of himself in order to have access to the truth ». ⁸⁹ Together with the « purifications, ascetic exercises, renunciations, conversions of looking, modifications of existence » listed by Foucault, we suggest that meditative prayers and the language of experiential knowledge might be interpreted as instances of a pre-Cartesian discourse, which constructed knowledge as attainable only by the transformation of the knowing subject. The last section of this essay will further explore this point by looking at the survival of Neoplatonic hymns in the arts and literature produced on the other side of the Alps.

In the company of painters, sculptors, and poets, so to speak, this peculiar spirituality made its way from Ficino's Florence to many prestigious European

⁸⁸ GIANFRANCESCO PICO, *Hymni Heroici Decem*, sig. C iii v: « Quamquam saepe novas artes, nova pectore versat | consilia antiquus geminato vulnere serpens, | ipse autem crebro in praecordia dura susurro | illapsus nostrae defigens lumina menti | compesce errantes oculos, et in ima ruentes | erige, ut in coelum patriam spectare perennem | assuescant, cordi infigens mandata tonantis | et quod peccatum est (peccatum quippe fatemur) | iam nos poeniteat, summum exorato parentem | det veniam, secumque sacro nos iungat amore | semper, et aethereis succendat pectora flammis ».

⁸⁹ MICHEL FOUCAULT, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject, Lectures at the Collège de France (1981-1982)*, ed. FRÉDÉRIC GROS et al., Palgrave, New York 2005, p. 15, 19.

courts, such as those of Henri II's France and Queen Elizabeth's England. The Platonic conception of the work of art as an instrument of meditation, which serves to arouse the minds of readers by guiding them toward the contemplation of heavenly forms, became a distinctive form of experiential knowledge cultivated in northern European courts. This observation is consistent with what Sir Ernst Gombrich, a trailblazer in this area of studies, argued about the ancient gods populating Renaissance palaces, galleries and ceilings. These iconographic motifs, Gombrich contended, should not be taken simply as the visual substitutes of abstract concepts whose purpose was to teach concepts without using words. Rather, symbolic images – as Gombrich called them – were considered parts of an interconnected cosmos, in which God manifests abstract ideas through symbols scattered in nature, the function of which is to raise human minds from their bodily prisons toward the contemplation of invisible truths.⁹⁰ This concept must be applied not only to the courts and villas of the Italian Renaissance, but to the entire Early Modern period in Europe. While preserving their original function as spiritual exercises acting upon the minds of the reader, in this context, hymns addressed to pagan gods and philosophical concepts could survive within the safer sphere of art and literature. Pierre de Ronsard (1524–1585) and Edmund Spenser (1552–1599) will further illustrate this last, and final, point.

Scholars have often argued that Renaissance Neoplatonism had a direct impact upon Pierre de Ronsard's poetry, and most importantly upon the numerous hymns he composed between 1555 and 1563.⁹¹ Jean Ceard, for example, has persuasively demonstrated how the overall structure of Ronsard's collection of hymns was meant to mirror the Neoplatonic dichotomy between intellectual and earthly spheres. Ceard, moreover, has emphasized the role Jean Daurat (1508–1588) played in translating ancient philosophical themes for Ronsard and other poets of the time.⁹² Building on this tradition of studies and on Gombrich's

⁹⁰ ERNST GOMBRICH, « *Icones Symbolicae: The Visual Image in Neo-Platonic Thought* », *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 11 (1948), p. 146, 170.

⁹¹ On this subject, see the still relevant cluster of essays published in 1960s and 1970s, originating from the pivotal ALFRED W. SATTERTHWAITE, *Spenser, Ronsard, and Dubellay*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2016. Originally published in 1960. HENRY HORNICK, « More on Ronsard's Philosophy: The Hymns and Neoplatonism », *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 27/2 (1965), p. 435–443. See also APOSTOLOS P. KOUIDIS, « Ronsard's Four Hymns to the Seasons: A Glorification of the Benevolent World », *Kentucky Romance Quarterly*, 22/2 (1975), p. 223–234. TERENCE C. CAVE, « Ronsard's Bacchic Poetry: From the *Bacchanales* to the *Hymne De L'automne* », *L'esprit créateur*, 10/2 (1970), p. 104–116. DONALD STONE, « The Sense and Significance of Ronsard's Seasonal Hymns », *Symposium: A Quarterly Journal in Modern Literatures*, 18/4 (1964), p. 321–331. ISIDORE SILVER, « Ronsard's Reflections on Cosmogony and Nature », *PMLA*, 79/3 (1964), p. 219–233.

⁹² JEAN CEARD, « *Dieu, les hommes et le poète: structure, sens et fonction des mythes dans les Hymnes de Ronsard* », in MADELEINE LAZARD (ed.), *Autour des Hymnes de Ronsard*, Champion, Paris 1984 (Unichamp, 7), p. 83–101.

interpretation of Renaissance Neoplatonic symbolism, Philip Ford concluded his monograph on Ronsard's hymns by explaining the countless and often remote mythological references scattered in these texts in light of the philosophy of Plato, Proclus and Ficino. Adapting Gombrich's insight to the analysis of Ronsard's hymns, Ford has persuasively argued that these texts use mythological allegories of philosophical concepts as symbolic images. Their purpose, therefore, is not simply packaging erudite notions in an embellished form but rather preparing the reader's mind to the contemplation of otherwise unspeakable truths.⁹³

Ronsard elaborated his conception of hymns as instruments of spiritual transformation through a close intertextual dialogue with Marullo's *Natural Hymns* and, specifically, with Marullo's hymn to Bacchus. According to Ford, Ronsard's hymn to the god of wine and mystic frenzy marks a turning point in the poet's rediscovery and mastering of the ancient liturgical form; a turning point, moreover, that owes much to Florentine Platonism at large. Besides the similarities with Callimachus, Homer, and Orpheus, Ronsard's hymn to Bacchus reveals a number of elements that strongly recall Marullo's work.⁹⁴ Although, at first sight Ronsard's account of mystic frenzy recalls a drunken state of euphoria rather than the Mystic frenzy evoked in Marullo's collection, the god that rises from the midst of the orgy pertains to the same semiological paradigm. As Marullo, Ronsard ascribes to Bacchus the guardianship over the balance of the Cosmos and the guidance of the dance of the elements in the sublunary world, thus creating a direct link between his work and Marullo's meditative and petitionary prayers to the gods.⁹⁵

Ronsard's hymn betrays the view of hymns as spiritual exercises and the theurgical function of ancient prayers revived in Ficino's Florence. The *epistrophe* staged in Ronsard's hymns culminates in the *Hymn to Autumn*, in which the poet recounts the story of his poetic inspiration as a lifelong dialogue with the ancient gods:

On the day that I was born, Apollo, who presides over the Muses, acted as my guide in this world, animated me with a penetrating and active mind, and made me love knowledge and honour. Instead of the great treasures and the worthless riches that dazzle the eyes of human beings, he gave me as my birthright the fury of inspiration, and the art of skillfully putting my lively imaginings into writing. He exalted my heart and exalted my imagination, inspiring my soul with a gift for

⁹³ PHILIP FORD, *Ronsard's Hymnes: A Literary and Iconographical Study*, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, Binghamton 1997, p. VII-VIII, 9.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 125.

Poetry, which god has granted only to those minds spurred by the sharp goads of his Divinity.⁹⁶

The hymn to Bacchus stages a ritual offering by which the officiant's soul is turned away from the prison of the body toward the contemplation of the cosmic harmony embodied by the god. In the *Hymn to Autumn*, instead, the conversion has already taken place and the poet can look back at his past acknowledging the supernatural origin of his inspiration:

I followed the dance, and fearfully pressed my steps into the prints of the Nymphs, and I thought that by placing my feet in their dusty tracks my soul would immediately become more noble, just like that of Ascrean, who uttered solemn poetry when one of the nine Sisters presented him with Laurel.⁹⁷

The poet regains his ancient role of prophet inspired by the deities, animated by a godly madness that drives his work of art. Poetry, therefore, becomes the key to obtaining the infinite knowledge of the gods by summoning their power in the context of a ceremony taking place within the domain of literature.

Another case of spiritual hymns in Early Modern Europe can be found in Edmund Spenser (1552–1599). Scholars agree that the author had a profound knowledge of Marsilio Ficino and Renaissance Neoplatonism. Valery Rees, for example, has thoroughly investigated Spenser's potential access to library holdings, focusing on the central role played by Ficino's translations and commentaries in the poet's approach to Plato's texts and ideas.⁹⁸ Eugene Hill, moreover, has discovered a series of correspondences between Spenser's take on Platonic ideas and other philosophers from Elizabethan England such as Everard Digby, thus contextualizing the poet's notion of a kind of transformative knowledge that produces changes in the subject in the broader English reception

⁹⁶ PIERRE RONSARD, *Selected Poems*, trans. MALCOLM QUANTON, ELIZABETH VINESTOCK, Penguin, London 2002: *Hymne de l'Autonne*, p. 73, l. 1–16: « Le jour que je fut ne, Apollon qui preside | Aux Muses, me servit en ce monde de guide, | M'anima d'un esprit subtil et vigoureux, | Et me fist de science et d'honneur amoureux. | En lieu des grands thresors et de richesses veines | Qui aveuglent les yeux des personnes humaines, | Me donna pour partage une fureur d'esprit, | Et l'art de bien coucher ma verve par escrit. Il me haussa le cœur, haussa la fantasie, | M'inspirant dedans l'ame un don de Poësia, | Que Dieu n'a concedé qu'a l'esprit agité | Des poignans aiguillons de sa divinité ».

⁹⁷ RONSARD, *Selected Poems : Hymne de l'Autonne*, p. 73, l. 43–48: « J'allois apres la danse, et craintif je pressois | mes pas dedans le trac de Nymphes, et pensois | que pour mettre mon pied en leur trace poudreuse | j'auerois incontinent l'ame plus genereuse: | ainse que l'Ascrean qui gravement sonna | quand l'une des neuf Soeurs du Laurier luy donna ».

⁹⁸ VALERY REES, « Ficinian Ideas in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser » in KENNETH BORRIS, JON QUITSLUND, CAROL KASKE (eds.), *Spenser Studies XXIV*, AMS Press, New York 2009, p. 73–134.

of Plato's texts.⁹⁹ It is mostly thanks to Kenneth Borris, however, that Spenser's reuse of Platonic themes in his poetic works, and most importantly in his *Faerie Queene* and *Fowre Hymnes*, has been recently scrutinized and traced back to its original sources. Among the multiple Platonic themes recognizable in Spenser's literary works, Borris has indicated a view of poetry as a tool for enlightening human souls, which invests the divinely inspired poet with a solemn ethical and political function. Spenser's *Hymnes*, in Borris' perspective, are thus to be interpreted as tools for preparing the reader to grasp an otherwise unreachable truth, which dwells above words and human understanding.¹⁰⁰

Besides giving evidence of a close dialogue with Plato and his Early Modern interpreters, Spenser's *Fowre Hymnes* can thus be read as a conscious reappraisal of Ficino's meditative prayers. Organized into two parts each consisting of two hymns, Spenser's collection juxtaposes the earthly manifestations of Love and Beauty with their heavenly counterparts, which the poet platonically situates in the world of Ideas. By means of elaborate invocations placed in four closely interconnected proems, and through carefully phrased prayers situated in the closing lines of each hymn, Spenser's collection not only conducts a thorough discussion of central concepts in Plato's philosophy, but also stages an itinerary of spiritual transformation explored in its aesthetic, ethical, and epistemological aspects. More precisely, the four hymns chart the poet's progressive detachment from earthly things and passions by means of a long meditation on how Love and Beauty manifest themselves in history and the cosmos, which accompanies the reader to the final contemplation of heavenly Beauty. This four-tiered process, which is modeled on Diotima's ladder in Plato's *Symposium* as well as on Ficino's notion of four frenzies, culminates in the opening lines of the third text of the collection, which marks the boundary between physical and ideal love. Only with Love's help, the poet declares in his *Hymne of Heavenly Love*, he will be able to transform himself and see things from the point of view of eternity, a transformation that, for Spenser, is both moral and artistic:

Love, lift me up upon thy golden wings, | from this base world unto thy heavens
hight | where I may see those admirable things, | which there thou workest by thy
souveraine might, | farre aboue feeble reach of earthly sight, | that I thereof an
heavenly Hymne may sing | unto the god of Love, high heavens king. | Many lewd
layes (ah woe is me the more) | in praise of that mad fit, which fooles call loue, | I
have in th'heat of youth made heretofore, | that in light wits did loose affection

⁹⁹ EUGENE D. HILL, « Everard Digby: A Syncretic Philosopher at Spenser's Cambridge », in BORRIS, QUITSLUND, KASKE (eds.), *Spenser Studies XXIV*, p. 135–154.

¹⁰⁰ KENNETH BORRIS, « Platonism and Spenser's Poetic », in BORRIS, QUITSLUND, KASKE (eds.), *Spenser Studies XXIV*, p. 209–269, especially 211–212, 214, 218–219.

move. | But all those follies now I do reprove, | and turned have the tenor of my
string, | the heavenly prayes of true loue to sing.¹⁰¹

Differently from Gianfrancesco Pico, however, Spenser's use of Scriptural imagery does not stem from polemical purposes or a critical attitude toward other literary expressions of the time. Much like Ronsard, whose hymns he certainly knew and imitated, Spenser interprets the process of spiritual change as a transformation of his skills as a poet and a philosopher. More than a meditative practice used to enrich Christian spirituality with elements extracted from a foreign religion, once again, Spenser's hymns revive ancient prayers in the context of a defense of poetry, prudently confined within the boundaries of literature.

VI. Conclusion

Although selective and ultimately incomplete, this essay illustrates how the rediscovery of Neoplatonic hymns brought about a new form of spirituality that blurs the boundaries of philosophy and religion.¹⁰² The progressive exclusion of this spiritual practice from the domain of philosophy, as well as its containment within the reassuring borders of antiquarianism and literature, moreover, gives partial evidence of how the modern-day dichotomy between rational and experiential knowledge might have gradually come about. If philosophers, so to speak, do not pray anymore, it is because of very specific circumstances, which our short history of philosophical hymns has attempted to illustrate. Rather than belonging to essentially incompatible domains, philosophy and prayers have actually often crossed paths in the course of Western cultural history, and notably during late Antiquity and the Renaissance. Sometimes, as in the case of Ficino and Marullo, the peculiar experience aroused by hymn-singing was perceived as complementary to philosophical inquiry. At other times, instead, hymns were condemned for using non-Christian elements, rewritten according to Catholic orthodoxy, projected upon the foreign background of antiquity, or situated within the safer boundaries of literature. Either way, hymn-singing and the form of knowledge this practice entails were at least available to negotiate one's identity in a pluralistic field of options and possibilities. While this spiritual

¹⁰¹ EDMUND SPENSER, *The Fowre Hymnes*, ed. LILIAN WINSTANLEY, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1903, vol. III, p. 1–14.

¹⁰² In this sense, the revival of Neoplatonic hymns also instantiates a recurrent phenomenon in European religious history, that is, the development of new religious practices out of the scholarly investigation of past or foreign cultures. An excellent and, to our knowledge, unrivaled analysis of this entanglement between scholarship and spirituality is VON STUCKRAD, *The Scientification of Religion*, p. 114–177.

practice, as we contend, was progressively excluded from the domain of philosophy, one wonders whether it might have nevertheless survived and, if so, which form, disciplinary status and purposes it might have acquired in other historical contexts.

Answering these questions, of course, would go beyond the limits of this essay. The hymn to the Sun Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639) composed from the prison cell where the Holy Office held him captive on charges of heresy, however, might offer an instructive example of this kind of survival. Written on an Easter Sunday between 1605 and 1609, while the philosopher was confined to the dungeons of Castel Sant’Elmo in Naples, Campanella’s hymn to the Sun epitomizes the power ascribed to, together with the problematic nature of, the form of prayer discussed in this essay. Composed in the midst of Counter-Reformation Italy, Campanella’s prayer is addressed against both the materialistic worldview professed by natural philosophers linked with universities, and the dogmatism of theologians, who both denied the Sun’s intrinsically divine essence. Campanella’s hymn, therefore, might be interpreted as a late tribute to Ficino’s legacy, and to other attempts at grafting onto Christian spirituality ancient spiritual practices made available by humanistic scholarship. In consciously adopting a spiritual practice rejected by orthodox Christians as well as university-based philosophers, moreover, Campanella weaponized, so to speak, hymn-singing to craft his untamed identity in open conflict with the mainstream culture of the time:

People wrote to you denying sense and life, | and they made you worth less than flies. | I wrote that they were heretics, rebellious and ungrateful to you; | they buried me, because I vindicated you. | The flies and enemies receive joy from you; | so it must follow that it is better to be a fly or your enemy. | No one will pay attention to you if I remain darkened: | that great title of yours shall remain buried with me. | You are a living temple, statue and venerable countenance, | the magnified and supreme face of the true God. | Father of nature and blessed king of the stars, | life, soul, and sense of every secondary thing;¹⁰³

¹⁰³ TOMMASO CAMPANELLA, *Le poesie*, ed. FRANCESCO GIANCOTTI, Einaudi, Turin 1998, p. 89, l. 31–42: « Scrissero le genti a te senso e vita negando, | e delle mosche fecerti degno meno. | Scrisi’io ch’egli erano eretici, a te ingrati e ribelli; | m’han sotterrato, vindice fatto tuo. | Da te le mosche e gl’inimici prendono gioia | esserti, se seguiti, mosca o nemico meglio è. | Nullo di te conto si fara, se io spento rimagno: | quel tuo gran titolo meco sepolto fia. | Tempio vivo sei, statua e venerabile volto, | del verace Dio pompa e suprema face. | Padre di natura e degli astri rege beato, | vita, anima e senso d’ogni seconda cosa », English translation in TOMMASO CAMPANELLA, *Selected Philosophical Poems of Tommaso Campanella: A Bilingual Edition*, trans. SHERRY ROUSH, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2011, p. 186.

Alongside its broader historical significance, Campanella's hymn is thus the tragic assertion of an antagonistic religious identity. As he turned his eyes to the Sun like the ancient sages brought back to life by humanistic scholarship, Campanella situated himself among and against the numerous options that define Europe's early modern pluralism.

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THE POPE'S AGENTS IN CONSTANTINOPLE: EUGENIUS IV'S LEGATION ON THE EVE OF THE COUNCIL OF FERRARA-FLORENCE (1438–1439)*

MAARTEN HALFF

Abstract

The legation sent by Pope Eugenius IV to Constantinople in 1437 played a critical role in the long diplomatic efforts towards a reunification of the Latin and Greek Churches, and paved the way for the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–1439). With some exceptions, such as the later Cardinal Nicholas Cusanus, the members of the delegation have not received wide attention. This paper presents a biographical analysis of all those involved – the nuncios, the financiers and the galley commanders – and their relationship to the Pope. The findings provide new insight into Eugenius IV's diplomacy towards the Byzantines, as well as Cusanus's place in it. Cusanus's presence added conciliar legitimacy, but the key functions were in the hands of a core team of Venetians – including non-patricians – who had prior experience in Constantinople and a personal connection to the Pope.

Key Words

Pope Eugenius IV (Gabriele Condulmer), Nicholas of Cusa, Cristoforo Garatone, Marco Condulmer, Antonio Condulmer, Balthasar Lupari, Michele Zono, Council of Ferrara-Florence.



* I express my gratitude to Reinhold C. Mueller for inspiring and advising me on archival paths in Venice; they have led me to the distinctly Venetian perspective of this paper. I am grateful to the two anonymous reviewers for their careful reading and thoughtful suggestions. I also thank Peter Bell, Elena Belletti, Christopher Bellitto, Dawn Brancati, Gerald Christianson, Thomas Izbicki, John Monfasani, and Denis Robichaud for comments on an earlier draft, which was presented at the 2019 annual conference of the Renaissance Society of America, in Toronto.

I. Papal diplomacy towards the Byzantines on the eve of the Council of Ferrara-Florence

In a brief biographical sketch written in 1449, shortly after his appointment as cardinal, the German philosopher and churchman Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464) stated of himself that:

In his 37th year, he was sent as ambassador by Pope Eugene IV to Constantinople and brought to the Council of Florence the Emperor of the Greeks as well as the Patriarch with 28 archbishops of the Eastern Church who accepted there the faith of the Holy Roman Church.¹

Cusanus was referring to his mission to Constantinople in 1437, his stay there from September to late November,² and his return on a Venetian convoy³

¹ Latin text in ERICH MEUTHEN (ed.), *Acta Cusana: Quellen zur Lebensgeschichte des Nikolaus von Kues*, [hereinafter AC], vol. I, part 2, Felix Meiner, Hamburg 1983, no. 849. English translation of this segment in MORIMICHI WATANABE, « Political and Legal Ideas », in CHRISTOPHER M. BELLITTO, THOMAS M. IZBICKI, GERALD CHRISTIANSON (eds.), *Nicholas of Cusa: A Guide to a Renaissance Man*, Paulist Press, New Jersey 2004, p. 141–165, here p. 147.

² On Cusanus's time in Constantinople and its impact on him and his work, see, among others: MAARTEN HALFF, « Did Nicholas of Cusa Talk with Muslims? Revisiting Cusanus' Sources for the *Cribatio Alkorani* and Interfaith Dialogue », *Revista Española de Filosofía Medieval*, 26/1 (2019), p. 29–58; WALTER ANDREAS EULER, « Nikolaus von Kues und die Ostkirche: Idee und Wirklichkeit des Religionsdialog », in ANDREAS SPEER, PHILIPP STEINKRÜGER (eds.), *Knotenpunkt Byzanz: Wissensformen und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2012, (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 36), p. 496–509; ERICH MEUTHEN, *Nicholas of Cusa: A Sketch for a Biography*, trans and intr. DAVID CROWNER, GERALD CHRISTIANSON, Catholic University of America Press, Washington, DC, 2010, p. 53–58; DONALD F. DUCLOW, « Life and Works », in BELLITTO, IZBICKI, CHRISTIANSON (eds.), *Renaissance Man*, p. 35; PAULINE M. WATTS, « Renaissance Humanism », in *Ibid.*, p. 174–175; JAMES E. BIECHLER, « Interreligious Dialogue », in *Ibid.*, p. 272–273; H. LAWRENCE BOND, « Nicholas of Cusa from Constantinople to 'Learned Ignorance': The Historical Matrix for the Formation of the *De docta ignorantia* », in GERALD CHRISTIANSON, THOMAS M. IZBICKI (eds.), *Nicholas of Cusa on Christ and the Church: Essays in Memory of Chandler McCuskey Brooks for the American Cusanus Society*, Brill, Leiden 1996 (Studies in the History of Christian Thought, 71), p. 135–163, here p. 138–139.

³ Much has been written about Cusanus's statement, in the dedication of his foundational philosophical work *De docta ignorantia* (1440), that he arrived at his insights during the sea journey from Constantinople through a « celestial gift from the Father of Lights ». See, among many others, HANS GERHARD SENER, « 'In mari me ex Graecia redeunte, credo superno dono'. Vom Wissensfrust zur gelehrten Unwissenheit. Wie platzte 1437/1438 der Knoten? », in SPEER, STEINKRÜGER, *Knotenpunkt Byzanz*, p. 481–495; BOND, « The Historical Matrix », p. 136; and MARJORIE O'ROURKE BOYLE, « Cusanus at Sea: The Topicality of Illuminative Discourse », *The Journal of Religion* (1991), p. 180–201. To my knowledge, the possibility has not yet been considered that this illuminative moment may have (also) involved a weather phenomenon: the Byzantine official Sylvester Syropoulos (about whom more below), who travelled on the very same convoy as Cusanus, marveled at seeing, during a violent storm, a « sweet and pleasant brightness which shone down on us then and which some of us saw with our own eyes », see FOTINI KONDYLI, VERA

carrying the Byzantine Emperor John VIII Paleologos and the Greek Patriarch Joseph II to what would become the Council of Ferrara-Florence.⁴ At the time of departing on this journey, Cusanus was a member of the Church Council then gathered at Basel – relatively junior in rank, but seen as a rising star and held in high regard for his knowledge of Church history and his legal acumen. The Council had become deeply divided on questions relating to the constitutional powers of the Pope,⁵ and on the issue of where to meet with the Byzantine Emperor and the Greek Orthodox prelates for a reunification of the two Churches. Pope Eugenius IV – the Venetian Gabriele Condulmer – had proposed that it be held in Italy, at a location to be finalized in consultation with the Byzantines upon their arrival to Italy. A minority of the Council, including its most senior members as well as Cusanus, had sided with Eugenius. A numerical majority, in contrast, preferred Basel or Avignon, further away from the Pope's influence.

The differences proved to be irreconcilable and ultimately tore the Council apart. Two opposing Council decrees were adopted on the same day in May 1437,⁶

ANDRIOPOULOU, EIRINI PANOU, MARY B. CUNNINGHAM (eds.), *Sylvester Syropoulos on Politics and Culture in the Fifteenth-Century Mediterranean*, Ashgate, Surrey – Burlington 2014 (Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman studies, 16), p. 201 and fn. 65; the editors suggest that Syropoulos may have seen what is known as the « fire of St. Elmo ».

⁴ The foundational study on this Council is JOSEPH GILL, *The Council of Florence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1959, to which should now be added SEBASTIAN KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII. Palaiologos und das Konzil von Ferrara-Florenz (1438/39)*, Hiersemann, Stuttgart 2013 (Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters, 60). Through extensive archival research, Kolditz significantly expands on, and often supersedes, Gill. For the diplomatic preliminaries to the Council – the historical context for the findings presented in this paper – see in particular the discussion in KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 42–166. Other relevant studies include: MARIOS PHILIPPIDES, WALTER K. HANAK, *Cardinal Isidore, c. 1390–1462. A Late Byzantine Scholar, Warlord and Prelate*, Routledge, London–New York 2018, p. 38–78; and GIUSEPPE ALBERIGO (ed.), *Christian Unity. The Council of Ferrara-Florence 1438/39–1989*, Peeters, Leuven 1991 (Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium, 97). For the Council of Basel, and the confrontation of pro-papal and conciliar factions there, see MICHIEL DECALUWÉ, THOMAS M. IZBICKI, GERALD CHRISTIANSON (eds.), *A Companion to the Council of Basel*, Brill, Leiden 2017 (Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, 74); MICHIEL DECALUWÉ, *A Successful Defeat. Eugene IV's Struggle with the Council of Basel for Ultimate Authority in the Church, 1431–1449*, Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome/Institut Historique Belge de Rome, Brussels – Rome 2009 (Bibliothèque de l'Institut historique belge de Rome, 59); JOHANNES HELMRATH, *Das Basler Konzil 1431–1439. Forschungsstand und Probleme*, Böhlau, Cologne 1987 (Kölner historische Abhandlungen, 32); GERALD CHRISTIANSON, *Cesarini: The Conciliar Cardinal. The Basel Years, 1431–1438*, EOS Verlag, St. Ottilien 1979 (Kirchengeschichtliche Quellen und Studien, 10).

⁵ The literature on what is referred to as conciliarism and the conciliarist movement is extensive. For an assessment, with ample literature citations, see GERALD CHRISTIANSON, « Conciliarism and the Council », in DECALUWÉ, IZBICKI, CHRISTIANSON (eds.), *Companion to the Council of Basel*, p. 75–111.

⁶ On 7 May 1437. For the texts, see EUGENIO CECCONI, *Studi storici sul Concilio di Firenze. Parte prima: Antecedenti del Concilio*, Tipografia all'insegna di S. Antonino, Florence 1869, docs. CXX and CXXI. The chronology of events in the period from May to December 1437 is sketched in annex 1 below. Annex 2 provides an overview of the main persons discussed in this paper.

with each faction claiming to be the legitimate representative of the Council, and each side dispatching embassies to the Byzantines to secure their acceptance. The leaders of the minority faction appointed three delegates – Antonio Martinez de Chaves, the Bishop of Porto; Peter of Versailles, the Bishop of Digne; and Nicholas Cusanus, a provost who clearly enjoyed high standing – to first present their decree to Eugenius. The Pope, residing at the time in Bologna, promptly endorsed the minority decree, and sent the three representatives on to Constantinople along with his own delegation, whom he was dispatching on a specially commissioned Venetian convoy to seal his long negotiations with the Byzantines.

This was a truly formidable diplomatic mission. Eugenius IV (and his predecessor Martin V before him) had sent envoys to Constantinople before, but never at this level and with the ecclesiastical powers of a legation,⁷ and not accompanied by such military strength. Based on earlier agreements with the Byzantines, the legation of 1437 was accompanied by three hundred Cretan crossbowmen to protect the city during the Emperor's absence. They were carried by three great galleys which, on the return journey, would transport hundreds of Byzantine officials to Italy. Eugenius seems to have spared no cost in this endeavour, and to have done so at great political risk: at the time of the convoy's departure from Venice, there was still no certainty as to how the Byzantines would decide in the face of two competing invitations from the West.

Much was at stake for Byzantines, too: the tentative willingness to discuss a unification of the churches was borne out of a desperate need for Western military aid against the advancing Ottomans,⁸ who had virtually surrounded the little that remained of the Byzantine Empire, and who had already launched two sieges against Constantinople, in 1401–1402 and 1422. A crusade against the Ottomans would require joint, coordinated action on the part of the rulers of Latin Christendom. None had the authority or convening power that the Pope wielded, and his ability to persuade European rulers to join in a new crusade in

⁷ Also noted by GEORG HOFMANN, « Päpstliche Gesandtschaften für den Nahosten, 1418–1453 », *Studia Missionalia*, 5 (1949), p. 45–71, here p. 59.

⁸ KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 69, points out that while the prospect of military aid was a major factor, Emperor John VIII also followed other political considerations, for which see, in detail, *Ibid.*, p. 70–166. Kolditz notes, *Ibid.*, p. 130, that the only contemporary Greek source that links Byzantine willingness to discuss unification to their hope for a Western military lifeline is a brief account by an anonymous official, who was on the same convoy to Venice in 1437 as the Emperor and the Patriarch, published and discussed in SOKRATES KUGÉAS (ed.), « Notizbuch eines Beamten der Metropolis in Thessalonike aus dem Anfang des XV. Jahrhunderts », *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 23 (1914/1919), p. 143–163. However, see also the reference, some decades after the events, by the historian THEODORE SPANDOUNES, *On the Origin of the Ottoman Emperors*, trans. and ed. DONALD M. NICOL, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1977, p. 28: « The power of the Turk was growing and John realized that he could not resist it on his own ... [John] therefore decided to go to the council [in Italy] ».

support of the Byzantines would, it was understood, be greater once the schism between the two Churches had been healed.⁹ Unification, however, was a highly controversial subject within the Greek church and the population at large, and opinion was deeply divided.¹⁰ The split in the Latin Church between conciliar and pro-papal forces – including the resulting divisions among secular rulers, reflecting the extent to which they supported either the Council or the Pope¹¹ – added a further level of complexity to the negotiations. During the period 1433–1437, diplomatic preliminaries to a council of union – talks about talks – had taken place on parallel tracks, with both the Council and Eugenius IV sending ambassadors to the Byzantine court and receiving Byzantine representatives.¹²

Following the arrival of Eugenius's legation in Constantinople in September 1437, the papal team's efforts bore fruit: in a major political victory for Eugenius,

⁹ For the historical context of Western and Byzantine efforts to halt the Ottoman advance see, COLIN IMBER, *The Crusade of Varna, 1443–45*, Ashgate, Aldershot-Burlington, VT, 2006, in particular the introduction; KENNETH M. SETTON, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)*, vol. II, *The Fifteenth Century*, The American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia 1978, in particular p. 1–81, covering the years 1402 up to 1444. Briefly: GILL, *Council of Florence*, p. 11–13 and p. 18–19. For contemporary political and intellectual approaches to crusades in the first half of the fifteenth century, see, among others, MARGARET MESERVE, « Italian Humanists and the Problem of the Crusade », in NORMAN HOUSLEY (ed.), *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century. Message and Impact*, Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire – New York 2004 (Crusades. Subsidia, 8), p. 13–38; and MARK WHELAN, « Dances, Dragons and a Pagan Queen: Sigismund of Luxemburg and the Publicizing of the Ottoman Turkish Threat », in HOUSLEY (ed.), *The Crusade in the Fifteenth Century*, p. 49–63, for a discussion of the role of secular rulers in rallying support for collective action against the Ottoman danger, and Emperor Sigismund's support for the unification of the Greek and Latin Churches in this context. For the Ottoman perspective on the Council and the threat of a united Christian front, see ELIZABETH E. ZACHARIADOU, « The Ottomans, the Greek Orthodox Church and the Perils of the Papacy », in KONDYLI et al., *Sylvester Syropoulos*, p. 23–32.

¹⁰ For Byzantine motivations and attitudes towards unification, see, among others, KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 70–95 (for opinions within the Church) and *Ibid.*, p. 135–166 (for the aristocratic elite); MARIE-HÉLÈNE BLANCHET, *Georges-Gennadios Scholarios (vers 1400-vers 1472). Un intellectuel orthodoxe face à la disparition de l'Empire byzantin*, Editions l'Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, Paris 2008 (Archives de l'Orient chrétien, 20), in particular p. 251–314; DONALD M. NICOL, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261–1453*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1993 (2nd edition), in particular p. 318–368; DENO JOHN GEANAKOPOLOS, « The Council of Florence (1438–39) and the Problem of Union between the Byzantine and Latin Churches », in *Id.*, *Constantinople and the West*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, WI, 1989 (Gallica, 25), p. 224–254 (originally printed in *Church History*, 24 (1955), p. 324–346). For earlier efforts to obtain support in the West by Emperor Manuel II Paleologos, father of John VIII, see JOHN W. BARKER, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391–1425): A Study in Late Byzantine Statesmanship*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ, 1969.

¹¹ See JOACHIM W. STIEBER, *Pope Eugenius IV, the Council of Basel and the Secular and Ecclesiastical Authorities in the Empire. The Conflict over Supreme Authority and Power in the Church*, Brill, Leiden 1978 (Studies in the History of Christian Thought, 13).

¹² See, among others, KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 51–63, and, summing up, p. 69; GILL, *Council of Florence*, p. 46–75.

the Byzantine Emperor rejected the offer of the Council of Basel majority faction – whose representatives and convoy had arrived in Constantinople shortly after that of Eugenius – and instead decided that the Byzantine delegation would board the papal Venetian galleys and travel to Italy. Arriving in Venice in February 1438, they continued to Ferrara for the opening of the council of union. After lengthy debates, the Council adopted a decree of union on 6 July 1439 which, at least in name, mended the separation of the two churches for a few years¹³ and paved the way for Eugenius to rally the military power of the Latin West for a new crusade in 1444.¹⁴

Modern studies have assessed and recognized the diplomatic overtures in Constantinople in 1437 as a critical phase in the history of both the Council of Basel and the Council of Ferrara-Florence – and indeed in defining, until today, the relationship between Pope and church council.¹⁵ But other than the extensive literature about Cusanus,¹⁶ and references to the nuncio Cristoforo Garatone in studies on the Council of Ferrara-Florence,¹⁷ very little has been written about the persons who formed part of Eugenius IV's legation or who otherwise contributed to its success: the papal nuncios, the financiers and the galley commanders. Who were they, and what was their relationship to Eugenius and to each other? What experience or value, if any, did they add to the mission? These questions lie at the heart of this paper. By looking at the members of this mission individually and as a group, its aim is to establish a fuller picture of Eugenius's eastern diplomacy, and to reconstruct what he believed could lead to a successful negotiation with the Byzantine court. Equipped with a new, composite portrait of the mission, this paper also proposes a fresh perspective on the activities of Nicholas of Cusa in Constantinople, contributing to a longstanding debate within Cusanus scholarship.

II. *Nicholas of Cusa in Constantinople*

That Cusanus was an important member of the delegation of 1437 and a participant in at least some of the deliberations in Constantinople is beyond doubt. But did he play a lead part as ambassador in bringing back the Byzantine

¹³ For the Latin text of the decree, see GILL, *Council of Florence*, p. 412–415; for the aftermath, see *Ibid.*, 305–388, and for reactions and consequences in Constantinople: BLANCHET, *Scholarios*, p. 315–382.

¹⁴ The so-called Crusade of Varna, which ended in defeat of the Christian land forces at that city. See in particular, IMBER, *The Crusade of Varna*, *passim*.

¹⁵ See the main literature on the respective councils cited above, fn. 4.

¹⁶ See above, fn. 2 and 3.

¹⁷ See, for example, KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, and GILL, *Council of Florence*, both *ad indicem*.

Emperor and leading members of the Greek Church, as his autobiographical note suggests?

Contemporary sources provide some indications that can help assess Cusanus's own words. Rodrigo Didaci, deacon of Braga and a member of staff of one of the papal envoys, wrote from Constantinople to an associate in Italy that, on one occasion at the Byzantine court, Cusanus had deftly countered some arguments of the Basel majority delegation, drawing on his mastery of council history, and doing so to the satisfaction of the Byzantine Emperor himself.¹⁸ A dispatch by another eyewitness, the Dominican John of Ragusa, who was associated with the majority party of the Council of Basel, contains a possible echo of Cusanus's voice:¹⁹ Ragusa reported that in the course of one discussion with the Greeks, someone argued that a numerical majority does not always trump the voice of the minority – an allusion to the divisions at the Council of Basel. Ragusa lamented that the Greek Patriarch appeared to have been swayed, among other things, by the argument that the papal faction represented the « sanior pars » of the Council, since it comprised the more senior clerics, including a majority of the cardinals, and was therefore the legitimate representative.²⁰ While Ragusa does not attribute these arguments to any named delegate, it may well have been Cusanus who spoke on this particular point, as it has parallels to his thinking.²¹ Furthermore, Francesco Pizolpasso, archbishop of Milan, writing to Cusanus after the events in Constantinople, praised him in general terms for the efforts made for the unification of the Churches, without, however, specifying his exact role.²² So did the émigré Greek scholar George of

¹⁸ GEORG HOFMANN, « Rodrigo, Dekan von Braga; Kaiser Johann VIII. Palaiologos. Zwei Briefe aus Konstantinopel, 13. Oktober und 18. November 1437, zur Vorgeschichte des Konzils von Florenz », *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 9 (1943), p. 171–187. Excerpt from Rodrigo's letter in AC, I/2, no. 329.

¹⁹ On John of Ragusa, known as Ivan Stojković in his hometown Ragusa (now Dubrovnik), see further below.

²⁰ Ragusa's report in CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CLXXVIII; excerpt in AC, I/2, no. 330.

²¹ The suggestion that there is a connection to Cusanus' thinking on the legitimate representation of the universal Church and the role of majorities can be found in Meuthen's annotation to this passage in the *Acta Cusana*, as well as in WERNER KRÄMER, « Der Beitrag des Nikolaus von Kues zum Unionskonzil mit der Ostkirche », *Mitteilungen und Forschungsbeiträge der Cusanus-Gesellschaft*, 9 (1970), p. 34–52, here p. 50. Neither Meuthen nor Krämer cite specific works by Cusanus in this connection, but they may have had in mind his oration at the Diet of Frankfurt, delivered in June 1442. This includes passages in which Cusanus asserts that, with the departure of the most senior members of the Council, those gathered in Basel were canonically no longer capable of making conciliar decisions, irrespective of their numbers: « their error is arithmetical, and they come to conclusions through majorities without distinction [of persons] ». See THOMAS M. IZBICKI (trans.), *Nicholas of Cusa: Writings on Church and Reform*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge – London 2008, p. 162–259, here, p. 237–239.

²² See AC, I/2, no. 349.

Trebizond in the dedication of his Latin translation of Plato's dialogue *Parmenides*, which he presented to Cusanus some time in the late 1450s.²³

These are affirmative but largely circumstantial references. All other extant reports from participants simply do not attribute a speaking role to Cusanus, if they mention him at all. Sylvester Syropoulos, a senior official in the Greek Church who provided a detailed and vivid account of the Council and its preliminaries from the perspective of the Byzantines,²⁴ described, for example, the arrival of the convoy in Constantinople in September 1437. He mentioned the head of the papal delegation, Marco Condulmer, as well as three «bishop-ambassadors»: Cristoforo Garatone, bishop of Corone; the bishop of Porto; and the bishop of Digne.²⁵ But there is no indication of Cusanus here. In fact, throughout his entire account, which includes detailed descriptions of the discussions at the Byzantine court in those months, Syropoulos does not mention Cusanus at all, not even indirectly.²⁶

A brief report to Eugenius IV from Constantinople dated 20 October 1437, sent jointly by the three minority representatives including Cusanus, speaks of the breakthrough in convincing the Byzantines, but gives little to no detail on how

²³ Cited in AC, I/2, no. 329, fn. 14. On George of Trebizond and Nicholas of Cusa, see JOHN MONFASANI, *George of Trebizond. A Biography and a Study of his Rhetoric and Logic*, Brill, Leiden 1976 (Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition, 1), p. 8–19; and JOHN MONFASANI, «Cardinal Bessarion's Greek and Latin Sources in the Plato-Aristotle Controversy of the 15th Century and Nicholas of Cusa's Relation to the Controversy», in SPEER, STEINKRÜGER (eds.), *Knotenpunkt Byzanz*, p. 469–480, here p. 477–480.

²⁴ VITALIEN LAURENT, *Les 'Mémoires' du Grand Ecclésiarque de l'Église de Constantinople Sylvestre Syropoulos sur le concile de Florence (1438–1439)*, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris 1971 (Publications de l'Institut français d'études byzantines, 3). For the English translation of chapter IV of Syropoulos's account, dealing with the journey from Constantinople to Italy and with the beginning of the Council proceedings, along with essays dealing with this segment, see the already cited KONDYLI et al. (eds.), *Sylvester Syropoulos*. On Syropoulos, who signed the unification decree at the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1439 but soon thereafter renounced his support, see, in addition, the entry in ERICH TRAPP et al. (eds.), *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*, vols. 1–12, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna 1976–1996, [hereinafter PLP], no. 27217. Among the extant manuscripts of Syropoulos's account, Laurent identified two versions, labelling them A and B, see LAURENT, *Les 'Mémoires'*, p. 42–47 and p. 83–96. The B tradition offers a few additional details of interest to the discussion here, cited below where relevant. Contrary to Laurent's conclusions, it has since been argued that this represents an earlier stage of the text, see JAN LOUIS VAN DIETEN, «Zu den zwei Fassungen der Memoiren des Silvester Syropoulos über das Konzil von Ferrara-Florenz. Die Umkehrung der These Laurents und die Folgen», *Annuaire historique conciliaire*, 11 (1979), p. 367–395. On the manuscript traditions see also, more recently, the discussion in KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 27–31.

²⁵ LAURENT, *Les 'Mémoires'*, p. 172–173.

²⁶ A point already noted by Laurent in his annotations to Syropoulos: *Ibid.*, p. 172, fn. 4, and by BOND, «The Historical Matrix», p. 140, fn. 26.

this was achieved.²⁷ In a more elaborate report delivered after the mission's return to Italy by the Bishop of Digne at the Council then in Ferrara, the only persons identified by name in the interactions with the Greeks are Cristoforo Garatone, as well as the Bishop of Porto and the Bishop of Digne himself, but not Cusanus. Multiple descriptions of the discussion in Digne's report simply refer to a collective or majestic « we ».²⁸ Furthermore, in the two brief missives sent from Constantinople by Cristoforo Garatone there is also no direct reference to Cusanus.²⁹ Finally, one must consider the official reporting by the envoys of the Council majority faction, including by the aforementioned John of Ragusa, who mentions Nicholas of Cusa but merely notes his presence.³⁰ Also significant here is a detailed, virtually day-by-day account by two ambassadors of the Basel majority presented on their return, in which they record the presence of Cusanus, but provide no indication of a specific role in the discussions, in contrast to the extensive attention given in their dispatches to Garatone and his role in the discussions.³¹

It seems clear from both the western and Greek sources that it was, in fact, Cristoforo Garatone, the Bishop of Corone, who did the heavy diplomatic lifting, more so than any of the other representatives. For one, Garatone already was Eugenius's representative and negotiator with the Byzantines, having been sent on previous missions to the Byzantine court (see below).³² The discussions in 1437

²⁷ Joint letter of the Bishop of Porto, the Bishop of Digne and Cusanus to Eugenius IV, 20 October 1437, in AC, I/2, no. 331.

²⁸ Report of 1 March 1438, presented in Ferrara, in CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CLXXXVIII.

²⁹ Garatone's reports in GIOVANNI MERCATI, *Scritti d'Isidoro il cardinale Ruteno e codice a lui appartenuti che si conservano nella Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome 1926 (*Studi e testi*, 46), p. 118–119 and p. 120–123.

³⁰ John of Ragusa, who was already in Constantinople when Garatone and the two bishops arrived in September 1437, presented his report to the Council of Basel in January 1438, see CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CLXXXVIII. The references to Cusanus are on p. DIX and DX. On John of Ragusa and his role in Basel and in Constantinople, see, among others: JESSE MANN, *Histories of the Council*, in DECALUWÉ et al., *Companion to the Council of Basel*, p. 54–59; HELMRATH, *Das Basler Konzil* p. 364–370, 438; PETAR VRANKIĆ, « Johannes von Ragusa im Ringen um die Teilnahme der Griechen am Basler Konzil », *Annuarium historiae conciliorum*, 27/28 (1995/96), p. 463–486; ANDRÉ TUILIER, « La mission a Byzance de Jean de Raguse, docteur de Sorbonne, et le rôle des Grecs dans la solution de la crise conciliaire », in *Bulletin philologique et historique*, 1979, p. 137–152; as well as a brief biographical entry in PLP, no. 8574.

³¹ Report by the Bishops of Viseu and of Lausanne, February 1438, in JOHANNES HALLER, GUSTAV BECKMANN, RUDOLF WACKERNAGEL, GIULIO COGGIOLA (eds.), *Concilium Basiliense. Studien und Quellen zur Geschichte des Concils von Basel*, vol. V: *Tagebücher und Acten*, Helbling & Lichtenhahn, Basel 1904, p. 277–362.

³² The only monograph on Garatone is LUIGI PESCE, « Cristoforo Garatone trevigiano, nunzio di Eugenio IV », *Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia*, 28 (1974), p. 23–93. See also GIACOMO MORO, « Garatone, Cristoforo », in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* [hereinafter: DBI], vol. 52, Rome 1999, p. 234–238, and PLP, no. 3550. Further references for Garatone below.

were a continuation of those that Garatone had led before. The Byzantines themselves perceived Garatone as the architect of the agreement once it had been reached. Sylvester Syropoulos describes Garatone as the person « who had accomplished all the aforementioned things », and underlines that he had already been sent to Constantinople by Eugenius three times. Moreover, Syropoulos recalls a scene on board one of the galleys to Venice, in which a senior Greek cleric addressed Garatone and complimented him on persuading the Emperor and the leadership of the Greek Church, suggesting that many rewards awaited him.³³

The available documentation, in sum, does not provide a foothold for attributing a significant negotiating role to Cusanus. This should not be very surprising, given that it would have been unusual for a junior cleric to assume diplomatic precedence over an archbishop and three bishops. It is also not a new conclusion, as it has already been reached by a number of scholars (albeit not always with reference to all the evidence cited above).³⁴ At the same time, it is not a conclusion that has always been fully embraced. Some of the literature has held on to the idea that Cusanus played an important or even leading role.³⁵ Authors who advance this view often invoke the skills and knowledge that Cusanus could bring to the mission – his erudition, his knowledge of Church history, his interest in books, even his presumed knowledge of Greek – and posit that it was because of these skills that he was chosen for the task.³⁶ To suggest a

³³ LAURENT, *Les 'Mémoires'*, p. 199; the same in English translation in KONDYLI et al. (eds.), *Sylvester Syropoulos*, p. 188.

³⁴ So also MARCO BRÖSCH, WALTER ANDREAS EULER, ALEXANDRA GEISSLER, VIKI RANFF (eds.), *Handbuch Nikolaus von Kues. Leben und Werk*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 2014, p. 50, which concludes: « Nach den erhaltenen Dokumenten stand Nikolaus nicht im Zentrum der Verhandlungen ». Similarly BOND, « The Historical Matrix », p. 140: « no proof that he played a serious role in the negotiations [...] or that he was directly instrumental in securing the Greeks' endorsement of the claims of the papal legation ».

³⁵ So for example, EULER, « Nikolaus von Kues und die Ostkirche », p. 505 (see fn. 2 above), who concludes that the report by Rodrigo Didaci confirms Cusanus's own assessment of his role. Similarly: MORIMICHI WATANABE, *Nicholas of Cusa. A Companion to his Life and his Times*, ed. GERALD CHRISTIANSON, THOMAS M. IZBICKI, Ashgate, Farnham – Burlington 2011, p. 287, says that « Cusanus was engaged in the important task of persuading the Greeks to come to the Council of Ferrara ». Erich Meuthen saw confirmation of a preeminent part for Cusanus: see his annotation to AC, I/2, no. 329 n. 14. Edmond Vansteenberghe asserted that the Bishop of Digne and Cusanus (but not the Bishop of Porto?) succeeded in removing any remaining doubts on the part of the Greeks, and that John VIII came to accept Cusanus's views on the infallibility of the apostolic see: EDMOND VANSTEENBERGHE, *Le Cardinal Nicolas de Cues (1401-1464): L'action – La pensée*, Champion, Paris 1920, p. 62. PETRO BILANIUK, « Nicholas of Cusa and the Council of Florence », *Proceedings of the Patristic, Medieval and Renaissance Conference*, 2 (1977), p. 59–75, provides a brief discussion of events in Constantinople, but none relating to the discussions with the Greeks.

³⁶ For example, BRÖSCH et al. (eds.), *Handbuch*, p. 51, after the conclusion mentioned in the footnote above, go on to underline that his proven skills as canonical lawyer, his knowledge of conciliar

way forward in this debate, this paper will, rather than looking ever more closely at Cusanus himself, shift attention to the other members of the mission: the envoys, the galley commanders and the financiers. By exploring the undertaking from Eugenius IV's perspective and assembling a composite impression of the legation, one may subsequently consider how Cusanus may have fit into this broader picture.

III. *The nuncios*

Marco Condulmer, Archbishop of Tarentaise. Legate de latere

On 15 July 1437, shortly before the legation's departure from Venice, Eugenius appointed Marco Condulmer – Archbishop of Tarentaise, a fellow Venetian and a relative of the Pope – as nuncio apostolic and head of the mission. He gave him broad powers as legate *de latere*, « similar to those given to cardinals ».³⁷ From other documents it appears that Eugenius intended such powers to include taking any necessary steps to block the efforts of the majority faction of the Council of Basel, including the power to excommunicate its members.³⁸ There is no record that Marco Condulmer actually used, or threatened to use, these or

history, and his search for manuscripts in Constantinople would have played an important supporting role in the negotiations. MEUTHEN, *Sketch for a Biography*, p. 53, says that he owed his place to his fascination with the Greek language. BILANIUK, « Cusa and Council of Florence », p. 64, suggests that Cusanus learned Byzantine theology and liturgy, and « since he knew Greek well », he read the works of Greek Church Fathers as well as classical philosophers in the original language. And WATANABE, *Companion to his Life*, p. 286, concludes that « his familiarity with the [Greek] language was no doubt one of the reasons why Cusanus was chosen to serve as a member of the minority group to visit Constantinople ». For the most recent contribution on the question whether Cusanus knew Greek, see JOHN MONFASANI, « Nicholas of Cusa, the Byzantines and the Greek Language » in MARTIN THURNER (ed.), *Nicolaus Cusanus zwischen Deutschland und Italien*, Akademie Verlag, Berlin 2002 (Veröffentlichungen des Grabmann-Institutes zur Erforschung der mittelalterlichen Theologie und Philosophie. Neue Folge, 48), p. 215–252.

³⁷ Eugenius IV's act giving Marco Condulmer authority as legate *de latere* published in CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CLXVIII, and the same in GEORGIUS HOFMANN (ed.), *Concilium Florentinum. Documenta et Scriptores, Epistolae Pontificiae ad Concilium Florentinum Spectantes*, vol. I, Pontificum Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, Rome 1940, no. 84. Marco Condulmer was also authorized to appoint, while on this mission, up to twenty-five persons as notaries under apostolic authority, i.e., to admit them to the *officium tabellionatus*, see GIORGIO FEDALTO (ed.), *Acta Eugenii Papae IV (1431–1447), e Vaticanis aliisque regestis collegit notisque illustravit*, Pontificia Commissio Codici Iuris Canonici Orientalis Recognoscendo, Rome 1990, no. 588, p. 301–302. On legations in general, and the powers of a legate *de latere*, see ANTONÍN KALOUS, *Late Medieval Papal Legation. Between the Councils and the Reformation*, Viella, Rome 2017 (Viella History, Art and Humanities Collection, 3), in particular p. 55–102.

³⁸ See the letter of 20 July 1437 from Eugenius to Marco Condulmer, in CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CLIII.

other measures in Constantinople against the ambassadors from Basel. The value of Marco Condulmer's authority as legate *de latere* may have been largely ceremonial in nature, raising his credentials in the eyes of the Byzantines, as it gave him a status equivalent to that of a cardinal and established him as direct agent of the Pope. In fact, the sources are remarkably quiet around Marco Condulmer, and his own voice is lacking from the records. There is no known report of the mission to Constantinople from his hand. All other participants make only occasional reference to him,³⁹ in contrast to the picture that emerges of Cristoforo Garatone as an active negotiator. From Syropoulos we know, nevertheless, that Marco Condulmer was treated with honour and pomp upon his arrival in Constantinople. Syropoulos adds a poignant detail: during a solemn welcome procession through the city, Condulmer gave benedictions to the crowds – a grave diplomatic *faux pas* in the eyes of his Orthodox hosts. But presumably out of respect for Condulmer's status, the Byzantines chose to set aside their collective indignation, and raised the matter with him discreetly rather than in a confrontational way.⁴⁰

The family relationship of Marco to Eugenius, that is, to Gabriele Condulmer, is not entirely clear. In the few studies where he is mentioned, he is referred to as Eugenius' nephew, based presumably on a passage in Syropoulos.⁴¹ A contemporary entry by the Venetian chronicler Antonio Morosini – which seems not to have been used on this point by modern studies – states that in 1431, immediately after his election as Pope, Eugenius IV drew a Marco Condulmer, son of a deceased and unnamed brother of his, into his immediate circle.⁴² A modern biographical sketch asserts that Marco's father was a Bartholomeo Condulmer,⁴³ although studies have not as yet identified a brother, or even cousin, of Eugenius by this name.⁴⁴ The Condulmer family trees in Pompeo Litta's nineteenth century genealogical work of prominent Italian families suggests, in contrast, that his

³⁹ The literature has followed the primary sources in this. Gill, for example, barely pays attention to Marco Condulmer, mentioning him by name only once (and then by first name only), and the three other times simply as « the Archbishop of Tarentaise ». See GILL, *Council of Florence*, p. 77, 79, 80 and 82.

⁴⁰ LAURENT, *Les 'Mémoires'*, p. 175 and 609.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 607. The studies that refer to Marco Condulmer as a nephew of the Pope do not indicate what source this is based on.

⁴² ANDREA NANETTI (ed.), *Il codice Morosini. Il mondo visto da Venezia (1094-1433)*, Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, Spoleto 2010 (Quaderni della Rivista di bizantinistica, 10), vol. III, p. 1526: « misier lo papa farde a preso uno altro so nievo in compagnia, fiol *condam* uno so fradelo clamado fo misier Marcho Condolmer citadin de Veniexia ».

⁴³ ACHILLE OLIVIERI, « Condulmer, Marco », in *DBI*, vol. 27, Rome, 1982.

⁴⁴ I am very grateful to Alan Stahl for sharing, by personal communication, preliminary findings of his extensive research into the branches of the Condulmer family, based on notarial and other records. No Bartholomeo or Marco of the right age and in immediate relationship to Gabriele Condulmer have yet been identified.

father was a Nicolò Condulmer, a doctor, who was not directly related to Gabriele the later Pope.⁴⁵ Whatever the exact blood ties to Eugenius, it is of interest that the Marco Condulmer referred to in the aforementioned Morosini chronicle as a « citadin de Venexia »,⁴⁶ that is, a non-patrician citizen of Venice, just like the Pope himself: contrary to assumptions sometimes made in the literature, Eugenius himself was not from a noble branch of the Condulmer family.⁴⁷

The accounts are clearer with respect to Marco's affiliation with Gabriele Condulmer in church matters, and on the latter's role in Marco's career advancement. Marco was associated at an early age with the congregation of canons of Saint Giorgio in Alga in Venice, an Augustinian community established in 1400 by, among others, Gabriele Condulmer.⁴⁸ In 1430, Marco was appointed by Pope Martin V as bishop of Avignon, a position he was confirmed in by Eugenius IV in 1432.⁴⁹ This was not a happy experience: the citizens of Avignon rose in protest against his administration.⁵⁰ In early 1433, Eugenius moved him on to govern the papal city of Bologna, an experience that also ended in crisis. Marco Condulmer got entangled in the city's internal divisions, and was imprisoned for some time by rebelling citizens.⁵¹ These setbacks were apparently not an obstacle to his advancement, and Eugenius elevated him to the position of Archbishop of Tarentaise in November 1433.⁵² In the course of these years, Marco was present at the Council of Basel, siding with Eugenius in his confrontation with the

⁴⁵ POMPEO LITTA, *Famiglie celebri di Italia. Condulmero di Venezia*, 1864. Digitalized version in the public domain by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France: <<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84523537.r=?rk=3218900;0>>, accessed on 6 October 2019.

⁴⁶ See fn. 41 above.

⁴⁷ Proof for this was provided by REINHOLD C. MUELLER, « Sull'establishment bancario veneziano. Il banchiere davanti a Dio (secoli XIV–XV) », in GIORGIO BORELLI (ed.), *Mercanti e vita economica nella Repubblica Veneta (secoli XIII–XVIII)*, vol. I, Banca Popolare di Verona, Verona 1985, p. 47–106. The fifteenth century Greek historian Chalkokondyles already noted that it was only at the request of the Pope that (his branch of) the Condulmer family was admitted into the Venetian *Maggior Consiglio*, i.e. thereby elevating them to patrician status. See LAONIKOS CHALKOKONDYLES, *The Histories*, ed. and trans. ANTHONY KALDELLIS, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA – London 2014 (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library), 2 vols., here vol. II, p. 35.

⁴⁸ In addition to the entry in *DBI*, see JOSEPH GILL, *Eugenius IV. Pope of Christian Union*, The Newman Press, Westminster 1961, p. 17–18. This biography – the only one available of Eugenius – should be used with caution for information about the Condulmer family and Gabriele's earlier years. Compare, for example, the essay by Reinhold C. Mueller, cited in the preceding footnote, with respect to Gabriele's commercial activities. A new, comprehensive biography of Eugenius IV would be desirable.

⁴⁹ CONRADUS EUBEL, *Hierarchia Catholica Medii Aevi*, vol. II, Sumptibus et Typis Librariae Regensbergianae, Münster 1914, p. 100.

⁵⁰ OLIVIERI, « Condulmer, Marco » in *DBI*; GILL, *Eugenius IV*, p. 45.

⁵¹ OLIVIERI, « Condulmer, Marco » in *DBI*; GILL, *Eugenius IV*, p. 67.

⁵² EUBEL, *Hierarchia Catholica*, vol. II, p. 245

conciliarist faction.⁵³ Although it is not clear whether he was present at the opening of the Council of Ferrara-Florence, or whether he took part in the deliberations, we find him as a signatory to the decree of union between the two Churches, adopted in July 1439.⁵⁴ After his legation to Constantinople, further promotions effected by Eugenius followed: in February 1438, Marco was appointed as Patriarch of Grado,⁵⁵ and later, in 1444, as Patriarch of Alexandria.⁵⁶ In 1445, Eugenius placed him in a notable military command position, appointing him as apostolic legate for the renewed campaign against the Ottoman Turks, covering specifically Cyprus, Rhodes, Egypt and Syria, with extensive powers over both land and naval forces.⁵⁷

Marco had prior experience in Greece. In 1429, he was deacon in the Venetian-held city of Patras in the Peloponnese. We know this thanks to the chronicle by George Sphrantzes (1401 – after 1477), righthand man to Constantine Paleologos, brother of the Byzantine Emperor, who led a Byzantine siege on Patras in that year.⁵⁸ Marco Condulmer formed part of a delegation of citizens who met the Greeks, including Sphrantzes, outside the city to inquire as to their intentions. Years later, Sphrantzes recognized Marco when, in September 1437, he and Constantine Paleologos boarded the papal galleys in Euboea to travel with them to Constantinople.⁵⁹ It is possible that Marco Condulmer had learned Greek

⁵³ See HELMRATH, *Das Basler Konzil*, p. 115. References to the then Bishop of Avignon in the Council's protocols for 1432 in HALLER, *Concilium Basiliense*, vol. II, for example p. 136 and 146. Marco Condulmer does not appear as a participant in the protocols for 1434 through 1436, although efforts to secure his release in Bologna were on the Council's agenda in 1434, see HALLER, *Concilium Basiliense*, vol. III, p. 145–146, 154.

⁵⁴ HOFMANN, *Epistolae Pontificiae*, p. 73.

⁵⁵ EUBEL, *Hierarchia Catholica*, vol. II, p. 160.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 85. Summarized text of the appointment by Eugenius IV, dated 16 December 1444, in FEDALTO, *Acta Eugenii IV*, no. 1224, p. 555.

⁵⁷ See FEDALTO, *Acta Eugenii IV*, no. 1227, 1 January 1445, p. 556–558. See also an entry in the apostolic accounts, dated November 1445, for the costs of twelve galleys outfitted at Marco Condulmer's behest, in NICOLAI IORGA, *Notes et Extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisades au XV siècle*, 3 vols., Ernest Laroux, Paris 1899, here vol. I, p. 91 (reference to « the patriarch of Alexandria », rather than a full name). Marco Condulmer's role in Eugenius' renewed efforts to launch a military expedition after the defeat at Varna in November 1444 has, to my knowledge, not yet been studied. IMBER, *The Crusade of Varna*, for example, does not mention Marco Condulmer at all, focusing instead on Cardinal Francesco Condulmer, vice-chancellor of the Pope and another relative of his, and on Francesco's role as legate and commander of the pontifical fleet in the 1444 campaign.

⁵⁸ On Sphrantzes, see PLP, no. 27278. After the death of this brother in 1448, Constantine Dragases Paleologos became the last Byzantine Emperor. See PLP, no. 21500.

⁵⁹ See GEORGE SPHRANTZES, *Chronicon Minus* in MARIOS PHILIPPIDES (trans.), *The Fall of the Byzantine Empire: A Chronicle by George Sphrantzes, 1401-1477*, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst 1980, p. 36 (parlay outside the city walls of Patras, 1429) and p. 49 (recognition upon boarding the convoy to Constantinople, September 1437). Sphrantzes' surprise at seeing Marco again is palpable. On the siege of Patras, an archiepiscopal see, see KENNETH M. SETTON, *The Papacy and the*

during his time in Patras: while Sphrantzes recalls that there was an interpreter present during their encounter in 1429,⁶⁰ Syropoulos mentions that on the sea journey to Venice in 1437–1438, « the legate », that is, Marco Condulmer, made a comment in Greek on the speed of the ship and the winds carrying them forward.⁶¹

Overall, the silence around Marco Condulmer in the sources relating to the 1437 mission gives rise to the impression of a ceremonial emissary, a figurehead, mostly noted for his loyalty to his relative the Pope, who had helped his career along in significant ways, and whom Marco had supported in the proceedings at the Council of Basel.⁶² That may also have been the extent of his role in Constantinople: not to be involved in the details of the negotiations, but to convey to the Byzantines, to the fullest extent possible, the authority and the person of Pope Eugenius IV: the former by Marco's rank and powers, the latter by his family relationship.

Cristoforo Garatone, Bishop of Corone. Nuncio apostolic

Cristoforo Garatone's key role in the negotiations in Constantinople in 1437 has already been noted. In both the Greek and Latin sources, Garatone eclipses the other legation members, including the legate himself, Marco Condulmer. Garatone's central role in the diplomacy towards the Byzantines is apparent not only during the debates in Constantinople. During the sea journey to Venice and upon arrival there, too, Garatone emerges from the sources as the Pope's chief executive and the main interlocutor for the Byzantine delegation. At a procession during a stop in the Venetian-held city of Modon (Methone), for example, Garatone took the place of distinction in accompanying the Greek patriarch.⁶³ Garatone also handled large sums of money throughout the mission,⁶⁴ addressed

Levant, vol. II, p. 32–35. Marco Condulmer held the function of deacon of Patras, at least on a titular basis, until January 1432, see EUBEL, *Hierarchia Catholica*, vol. II, p. 100. See also the brief entry on Marco Condulmer in *PLP*, no. 17078.

⁶⁰ SPHRANTZES, *Chronicle*, p. 36. The interpreter may have been for the sake of others on the delegation.

⁶¹ LAURENT, *Les 'Mémoires'*, p. 209; KONDYLI et al. (eds.), *Sylvester Syropoulos*, p. 199. This is the only indication in Syropoulos that he was on the same galley as Marco Condulmer on the journey to Italy.

⁶² This presents a marked contrast to the numerous and significant responsibilities that Eugenius IV entrusted to another relative, the above-mentioned Francesco Condulmer, who at the time of the legation of 1437 was already a Cardinal and *camerlengo* (treasurer) at the Curia, and who played a key role in designing and implementing Eugenius's eastern policies, including, as previously mentioned, legate and naval commander in the crusade of 1444. See ACHILLE OLIVIERI, « Condulmer, Francesco », in *DBI*, vol. 27 (1982), with extensive literature.

⁶³ LAURENT, *Les 'Mémoires'*, p. 205; KONDYLI et al. (eds.), *Sylvester Syropoulos*, p. 195.

⁶⁴ See the numerous reimbursements to Garatone from the *Camera Apostolica* for his expenses in connection with the 1437 mission, in IORGA, *Notes et Extraits*, vol. II, p. 6–8.

the Byzantines' financial demands and accommodation needs, and interpreted during (at least some) encounters with the doge of Venice and Pope Eugenius.⁶⁵ This is an unusual combination of functions for an envoy: seeing to the well-being of the high-level guests, managing finances, facilitating communications, and personally engaging in high-level diplomacy. This no doubt speaks to Garatone's executive aptitude and diplomatic skills, and the immense trust Eugenius must have placed in him in keeping the Byzantines content and engaged on the path of unification.

As noted, Garatone's presence in Constantinople in 1437 was the culmination of a longstanding diplomatic effort by Eugenius. The Pope had dispatched Garatone to the East on three previous missions: in 1433, 1434, and in 1435. During these times, Garatone had already engaged directly, and successfully, with Emperor John VIII Paleologos and the Greek Patriarch on the issue of a council of union, as well as with the Armenian church.⁶⁶ While his rank and powers on the mission in 1433 are not unambiguously documented, we know that in 1434 Garatone was already sent with the authority of an apostolic nuncio. In the letter of instruction to Garatone, Eugenius addressed him as master of arts, and as his (Eugenius's) secretary.⁶⁷ Similarly, in a letter to the Council of Basel that looked back at Garatone's successful mission to the East in the 1433, Eugenius referred to him as the Pope's secretary, and underlined his Greek and Latin language skills.⁶⁸ We know that by early February 1437 Garatone was still a canon of Padua.⁶⁹ On these earlier missions, then, Garatone was not a senior cleric. But shortly before the 1437 mission, in February of that year, Eugenius made Garatone Bishop of Corone, possibly with the specific objective of elevating Garatone's rank on a subsequent visit to Constantinople.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ LAURENT, *Les 'Mémoires'*, p. 205, 207, 223, and 231; KONDYLI et al. (eds.), *Sylvester Syropoulos*, p. 196, 198, 214 and 220.

⁶⁶ His previous missions to Constantinople discussed, with source references, in KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 53, 55–57; HOFMANN, « Die Päpstliche Gesandtschaften », p. 57–61; PESCE, « Cristoforo Garatone », p. 31–37; GILL, *Council of Florence*, p. 52–53 (mission of 1433), p. 57–58 (mission of 1434), p. 59 (briefing the Council of Basel on success of 1434 negotiations), and p. 63–65 (mission of 1435); CECCONI, *Studi storici*, p. 58–92.

⁶⁷ CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. XXVII, and HOFMANN, *Epistolae Pontificiae*, doc. 36. Hofmann summarizes the titles or forms of address used to refer to Garatone in the official correspondence in HOFMANN, « Die Päpstliche Gesandtschaften », p. 60.

⁶⁸ Ibid., doc. XXXI.

⁶⁹ He is referred to as such in his appointment, by Eugenius IV, as Bishop of Corone on 27 February 1437, see FEDALTO, *Acta Eugenii*, no. 490, p. 259, and below.

⁷⁰ For the 1437 appointment, see preceding footnote. His predecessor, a Jacob Ziera, had recently died. A contemporary source suggests that Cardinal Francesco Condulmer, another relative of Eugenius IV, recommended Garatone's elevation to Bishop of Corone, see PESCE, « Cristoforo Garatone », p. 39–40.

Garatone had risen from a humble background in Treviso, part of the Venetian *terraferma*. Born shortly before the end of the fourteenth century, he went on to study in Padua, where he crossed paths with well-known scholars and humanists of his day.⁷¹ To identify just one documented instance of an early connection to intellectuals and future leaders: we know that Garatone had studied Greek under one of the most-sought after teachers of Greek in Italy, Guarini da Verona, alongside Alberto da Sarteano,⁷² who, in 1439, was sent by Pope Eugenius IV as apostolic nuncio to the Coptic Church in Egypt,⁷³ and who later became Vicar-General of the Franciscan Order.

Before his service as papal point person, Garatone had accumulated extensive experience in Constantinople. From 1423 to at least 1428, he served there as notary and chancellor to the Venetian *bailo*, the resident representative in Constantinople.⁷⁴ This was a prestigious administrative function that brought its office holders into close and continual contact with both the Venetian and Greek community, as it had for Garatone's predecessor in this role, the famous humanist Francesco Filelfo.⁷⁵ One of Garatone's first acts in this position was to prepare the extension of the treaty between Venice and Byzantium regulating their trade relations: Garatone's name and function appear proudly among members of the Venetian and Greek elite who served as witnesses to the agreement.⁷⁶ If his knowledge of Greek had not already been fully developed under Guarino, Garatone is likely to have polished his skills while posted for six or more years in Constantinople. It has been suggested, at least in connection with the humanist Francesco Filelfo, predecessor of Garatone as chancellor, that the responsibilities of this post left sufficient time for the pursuit of other

⁷¹ On his formative years, see PESCE, « Cristoforo Garatone », p. 26–29. The possibility that Cusanus and Garatone may have known each other from their studies in Padua has, to my knowledge, not yet been considered. Garatone graduated in 1420, and Cusanus arrived c. 1417–1418 and graduated in 1423, see TOM MÜLLER, *Der Junge Cusanus. Ein Aufbruch in das 15. Jahrhundert*, Aschendorff, Münster 2013, p. 60–77.

⁷² In a letter to Garatone from 1443, Alberto da Sarteano makes reference to their playful student days under Guarino, see FRANCISCUS HAROLDUS, *Beati Alberti a Sarthiano. Opera Omnia*, Giovanni Battista Bussotti, Rome 1688, p. 376.

⁷³ HOFMANN, *Epistolae Pontificiae*, doc. 195 of 26 July 1439.

⁷⁴ PESCE, « Cristoforo Garatone », p. 29–30. On the functions of the *bailo*, see CHRYSSA MALTEZOU, *Ο Θεσμός του εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Βενετου βαΐλου (1268-1453)*, Athens 1970. Maltezou analyses the collection of documents known as the *capitolare del bailo a Costantinopoli*, in the State Archives of Venice – a miscellany of instructions, rules and practices relating to that office – and establishes a chronological list of office-holders for the period 1268–1453. Also relevant to the Venetian administration of its interests in Romania is FREDDY THIRIET, *La Romanie Vénitienne au Moyen Age*, E. De Boccard, Paris 1959 (Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 193).

⁷⁵ THIERRY GANCHOU, « Les *ultimae voluntates* de Manuel et Iôannès Chrysolôras et le séjour de Francesco Filelfo à Constantinople », *Byzantinistica*, 7 (2005), p. 195–285.

⁷⁶ Text of the treaty in GEORG THOMAS, *Diplomatarium Veneto-Levantinum*, vol. II, Venice 1899, no. 178, p. 341.

interests, including the study of Greek.⁷⁷ It was presumably in Constantinople that Garatone began avidly collecting manuscripts, including Greek codices, some of which are known to have been copied at his request.⁷⁸ In these efforts, he would have benefitted from an extensive network of contacts.⁷⁹ There is indeed evidence that he was well connected to the Byzantine elite, including the later Greek patriarch, Georgios Scholarios.⁸⁰

Some time after his service as chancellor in Constantinople in the 1420s, Garatone started working in close proximity to Eugenius. In 1432, Garatone was ordained as a priest and obtained a benefice from the Pope, and in that year or in early 1433 he took up a function as apostolic scribe and secretary to Eugenius,⁸¹ the function he was in when Eugenius sent him on his first mission to Constantinople in 1433. No conclusive records have been found to indicate how he first came to the attention of Eugenius, but it is possible that this was on the recommendation of Cardinal Francesco Condulmer, a relative of Eugenius IV, or

⁷⁷ GANCHOU, « *Les ultimae voluntates* », p. 252. On Filelfo, Garatone and other Italians who traveled to Constantinople to study Greek, see ANNA CLARA CATALDI PALAU, « Learning Greek in Fifteenth-Century Constantinople », in ANNA CLARA CATALDI PALAU (ed.), *Studies in Greek Manuscripts*, Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, Spoleto 2008, p. 219–234.

⁷⁸ For Garatone's humanist interests and book collecting, see MERCATI, *Scritti d'Isidoro*, p. 109–116, and more recently PAOLA TOMÈ, « Cultura greca e Occidente latino: il caso di Treviso » in ANTONIO LOVATO, DILVA PRINCIVALLI (eds.), *Mondo latino e civiltà bizantina. Musica, arte e cultura nei codici del '400*, CLEUP, Padova 2014 (Fonti e studi per la storia della musica veneta, 4), p. 41–78. Further on the identification of codices brought to Italy by Garatone and their places of origin, see ANNA CLARA CATALDI PALAU, « The manuscript production in the Monastery of Prodromos Petra (twelfth-fifteenth century) » in ANNA CATALDI PALAU (ed.), *Studies in Greek Manuscripts*, p. 197–206; by the same author, « I colleghi di Giorgio Baiophoros: Stefano di Medea, Giorgio Crisococca, Leon Atrapas », in *Ibid.*, p. 303–344; and again the same, « Legature Costantinopolitane del monastero di Prodomo Petra tra i manoscritti di Giovanni di Ragusa », in *Ibid.*, p. 235–280. A list of manuscripts owned by Garatone can be found in the online database *Pinakes* at <<https://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/>>; accessed on 10 December 2019. Ganchou sees in Garatone a « grand pourchasseur de manuscrits dans le capitale byzantine », and identifies a Georgios Chrysokokkes as the Greek copyist of a manuscript commissioned by Garatone, see GANCHOU, « *Les ultimae voluntates* », p. 244–245 and fn. 159, and p. 255 fn. 201. Important new archival material regarding Garatone's codices identified by KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 254. See also further below, for evidence that Garatone and Michele Zono, one of the financiers in 1437, knew each other from before the mission.

⁷⁹ Garatone could have been a prime source of information for Cusanus on where to buy or commission manuscripts, for example at the monastery of Prodromos Petra, identified by Cataldi Palau as « the place to go when in Constantinople, for acquiring Greek manuscripts, having them copied and bound », and as the confirmed source of at least some of Garatone's purchases, see CATALDI PALAU, « Learning Greek », p. 233.

⁸⁰ See MARIE-HÉLÈNE BLANCHET, THIERRY GANCHOU, « Les fréquentations byzantines de Lodisio de Tabriz, dominicain de Péra († 1435): Géorgios Scholarios, Iôannès Chrysolôras et Théodôros Kalékas », *Byzantion*, 75 (2005), p. 70–103, in particular p. 91–93 and 98 for Garatone's time in Constantinople and his interactions with Georgios Scholarios. On Scholarios, see *PLP*, no. 27304.

⁸¹ PESCE, « Cristoforo Garatone », p. 31–32.

other influential clerics at the curia from Treviso (like Garatone), such as Eugenius's relative Daniele Scoti, who was *camerlengo* at the curia starting in 1431, and whom Garatone may have known from either Treviso or Padua.⁸²

After the adoption of the decree of union at the Council of Ferrara-Florence, Garatone accompanied the Emperor back to Constantinople in 1439, again in the capacity of nuncio, and remained there until 1441 on the instruction of Eugenius to see to the proper implementation of the decree of union.⁸³ He was subsequently sent on four missions to Hungary, the last on behalf of Pope Nicholas V, with a key executive role in organizing a crusade against the Turkish forces in the Balkans. On his last mission there, Garatone died in the second battle of Kosovo in 1448.⁸⁴

What stands out regarding Garatone, in sum, is his extensive experience in Constantinople and in engaging with the Byzantines, his fluency in Greek, his prior and subsequent service to Eugenius IV, his connections to Venice, and the extensive trust the Pope placed in Garatone for handling some of the most significant and sensitive issues of his pontificate. It is also worth noting that Garatone, like Marco Condulmer and the Pope himself, was not a patrician.

IV. *The commanders of the papal fleet*

The officers commanding the galleys to and from Constantinople were not members of the legation as such. Eugenius IV nevertheless appears to have understood that in order to bring the leadership of the Byzantine Empire and the Greek Church safely to Italy, arrangements for a secure sea transportation, as well as for the military protection of the city, were a priority. Indeed, they formed part of earlier commitments made by his predecessor, Martin V, in his negotiations with the Byzantines. Eugenius had four Venetian galleys armed and fitted out at papal expense,⁸⁵ and he appointed Antonio Condulmer, a relative, as captain general with very broad powers to execute the mission (see below). In addition to the commander of the fleet and its flagship, there were three

⁸² Ibid., p. 27, 30–31.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 44–46. For the appointment, see FEDALTO, *Acta Eugenii IV*, p. 399, HOFMANN, *Epistolae Pontificiae*, no. 219, p. 116.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 47–55. In 1444, Garatone is to be found in these organizational tasks alongside Michele Zono, who, as noted below, was also a key figure in the 1437 mission; see IORGA, *Notes et Extraits*, vol. II, p. 22.

⁸⁵ Clearly stated by Eugenius himself in his letter of 6 July 1437, CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CLX, as well as numerous other sources. For probable reimbursements from the *Camera Apostolica*, including possible salaries to Antonio Condulmer, Alvise Bembo and Nicolò Contarini, see IORGA, *Notes et extraits*, vol. II, p. 9.

sopracomiti or galley commanders⁸⁶ – one for each of the other three vessels – serving under him. The process by which they were appointed, and whether this was left to the Pope or to Venice or settled through consultations, is not yet clear. The galleys were state-owned,⁸⁷ and in June, July and August 1437 the Venetian Senate passed a number of directives with respect to this fleet, which are referred to in the Venetian records as the galleys of the Pope.⁸⁸ There is also a hint in an unpublished Venetian chronicle that the government of Venice had nominated at least two of the commanders as early as May 1437.⁸⁹ A look ahead at the process followed in 1444, when Venice was outfitting a larger war fleet under papal authority and partially at his expense, may offer some insight: the six galley commanders, which included commanders who had served in 1437 and who are discussed in this paper, were formally appointed by the Venetian Senate upon the recommendation of the legate Cardinal Francesco Condulmer, on behalf of Eugenius.⁹⁰ However, one cannot conclude with certainty that the same process was also followed in 1437, as the official records of the relevant Venetian institutions do not provide conclusive evidence of state involvement in the nominations of either the commanders of that year, or indeed the lower-ranking officers of the special papal fleet.⁹¹ Neither is there documented confirmation that Eugenius was directly involved in their selection, other than that of Antonio Condulmer. It is therefore possible that the broad powers given to Antonio Condulmer over the ships as well as its captains and other officers was understood to give him discretion in selecting them.⁹² If so, it seems that

⁸⁶ The role of Venetian naval officers discussed in LANE, *A Maritime Republic*, p. 50, and ALAN M. STAHL, « Michael of Rhodes: Mariner in Service to Venice », in PAMELA O. LONG, DAVID MCGEE, ALAN M. STAHL (eds.), *The Book of Michael of Rhodes. A Fifteenth Century Maritime Manuscript*, vol. III, The MIT Press, Cambridge-London 2009, p. 35–98.

⁸⁷ As all galleys were by the early 15th century, see FREDERIC CHAPIN LANE, *Venetian Ships and Shipbuilders of the Renaissance*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore – London 1934 (repr. 1992), p. 14 and 101.

⁸⁸ For discussions in the Senate in these months regarding the galleys and the Cretan troops, see: Venice, Archivio di Stato di Venezia [hereinafter ASV], Senato, Misti, reg. 60, fol. 22v; fol. 23v–24r; fol. 28v; fol. 30v. A critical document is the instruction given on 9 June 1437 to Ermolao Donato, ambassador to Eugenius, to discuss the arrangements and Venice's contribution to the mission: ASV, Senato, Secreti, reg. 14, fol. 40r–40v. Also note the exchange with Garatone, who presumably appeared in person in the Senate on 17 July 1437, regarding the Cretan crossbowmen: *Ibid.*, fol. 47v.

⁸⁹ This is from an anonymous manuscript in the Foscari collection in Vienna, known as the *Diarii veneti dal 1412 al 1442*, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Lat. cod. 6205, fol. 102v. See also further below, under Alvise Bembo and Nicolò Contarini.

⁹⁰ See ASV, Senato, Mar, reg. 1, fol. 226v. This included « Antonio Condulmer *maior* » and Nicolò Contarini, son of Gasparino.

⁹¹ After 1418, all such junior officers were chosen through elections held by the Collegio, see STAHL, « Michael of Rhodes, Mariner in Service to Venice », p. 66.

⁹² See the letter of 6 July 1437 to Antonio Condulmer, in CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CXL.

Condulmer started on this process before his formal appointment by Eugenius on 6 July, as there is evidence that already by 29 June a lower-ranking officer had been selected for one of the galleys.⁹³

Irrespective of Eugenius's precise role in the selection of each commander – directly or through Antonio Condulmer on his behalf – the profiles of all four are of importance to understand the composition and nature of the Constantinople mission. Aside from Antonio Condulmer, their names have come down to us not through instructions relating to the mission or reports of its participants, but through other fortuitous references.⁹⁴

Antonio Condulmer, captain general of the fleet

Studies have assumed that Antonio Condulmer was another nephew of Eugenius.⁹⁵ This is how Syropoulos refers to him.⁹⁶ But none of the Western sources, including Eugenius's own instructions, identify him as such.⁹⁷ In fact, Antonio must have been from another branch of the Condulmer family, and not

⁹³ This follows from ASV, Collegio, Notatorio, reg. 6, fol. 178r: in June 1437, a « Nicolai de Judecca », *civitus veneti*, was elected to serve on the regular fleet of that year to Constantinople as *comito* and *homo de conseio*. On 29 June 1437, he was replaced by Giacomo di Roga after Nicolai had, instead, enlisted for service on the *Pasqualiga*, possibly in the same or a higher function. The entry from the Collegio's records, without reference to the papal galley, is also included in FREDDY THIRIET, *Délibérations des Assemblées Vénitiennes concernant la Romanie*, Mouton, Paris – The Hague 1971, vol. II, no. 1358.

⁹⁴ In what follows, I apply the Venetian term *Romania* to refer to the Byzantine Empire, or what had been part of, which they considered a continuation of the Roman Empire, that is: parts of Greece, the Aegean islands, Constantinople, as well as beyond: the ports of Tana and Trebizond. It was closely associated with territories and harbours gained by Venice in the so-called fourth crusade of 1204. See FREDERIC C. LANE, *Venice: A Maritime Republic*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore – London 1973, p. 32 and p. 68.

⁹⁵ So, among all other works consulted, LAURENT, *Les 'Mémoires'*, p. 172, fn. 4; GILL, *Council of Florence*, p. 82; KONDYLI et al., *Sylvester Syropoulos*, p. 187. This appears to have the extent to which biographical details of Antonio Condulmer have been traced in the literature. The entry in *PLP*, no. 13495, « Κουντλουμέρης (Kuntlumeres) », which is what Syropoulos calls him, does not provide information beyond what is found in the latter's memoirs.

⁹⁶ LAURENT, *Les 'Mémoires'*, p. 176.

⁹⁷ The reports of John of Ragusa, of the Bishop of Digne, and of the Bishops of Viseu and Lausanne mention « the captain », but give no name. Garatone does not mention him at all in his reports. In an entry for July 1431, Marin Sanudo the Younger mentions – albeit not in relation to the Constantinople mission – an Antonio Condulmer, « parente del Papa », see MARIN SANUDO IL GIOVANE, *Le vite dei Dogi 1423–1474*, ed. ANGELA CARACCIOLLO ARICO, CHIARA FRISON, vol. I: 1423–1457, La Malcontenta, Venice 1999, p. 95. This is the only contemporary Western source I have found that brings out the connection between an Antonio Condulmer and Eugenius. Sanudo indicates no family relationship when noting that the papal fleet being prepared in July 1437 was under the command of Antonio Condulmer, *Ibid.*, p. 617.

related by blood: Eugenius addresses Antonio as « nobilis vir », ⁹⁸ an honorific used exclusively for Venetian nobles, ⁹⁹ whereas, as noted above, Eugenius was not. ¹⁰⁰ There are further indications, mentioned below, that Antonio was a patrician. It would have been unheard of for a non-nobleman to command a state-owned Venetian galley or fleet. ¹⁰¹

The documents relating to the Constantinople mission itself – the instructions from Eugenius, for example – do not provide us with a patronym or other identifying details. Nevertheless, references in other contemporary records to an Antonio Condulmer in this period are few, and all those that exist form a coherent picture, a plausible career path of one person. In 1413, an Antonio Condulmer son of Bernardo was entered into the *Balla d'Oro*, the annual lottery that provided a chance for young patrician men of at least eighteen years to enter the *Maggior Consiglio* at an earlier age than the default. ¹⁰² Some years later, an Antonio Condulmer – without patronym – is recorded by the contemporary chronicler Antonio Morosini as *patron*, or commander, of a commercial cog to Syria in 1420, ¹⁰³ of a cog to Valencia in 1422, ¹⁰⁴ again to Syria in 1425, ¹⁰⁵ in 1427, ¹⁰⁶

⁹⁸ See letter cited above, CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CXL. Michael of Rhodes, a crewmember of the same fleet serving, refers to Antonio Condulmer as « egregius vir ». See below, under Alvise Bembo, for source references for Michael of Rhodes. See also below, an entry for Antonio Condulmer in the *prove di età* for naval assignments in 1434.

⁹⁹ I thank Reinhold Mueller for the observation that the Venetians were punctilious about honorifics, and would never use « nobilis vir » to describe or address a non-patrician.

¹⁰⁰ MUELLER, « Sull'establishment bancario veneziano », p. 90, citing archival sources on p. 103. A further indication of Gabriele Condulmer's status as citizen, rather than patrician, follows from Morosini who refers to him, in recording news of his election as Pope, as « citadin original de Veniexia », see NANETTI, *Il codice Morisini*, vol. III, p. 1479.

¹⁰¹ See for a discussion of the role of nobles and non-nobles in Venetian naval enterprise, STAHL, « Michael of Rhodes: Mariner in Service to Venice », p. 40–41. For the privileges of nobility in international trade, see FREDERIC C. LANE, *Andrea Barbarigo, Merchant of Venice. 1418–1449*, Octagon, New York 1967 (repr.), p. 11–15.

¹⁰² ASV, Avogaria di comun, Balla d'Oro, reg. 162–I, fol. 52v. My identification of the relevant record of the *Avogaria di comun* here, as well as the one cited below, is thanks to the indexing by Rik van Hauwe: <www.rikvanhauwe.net/provedieta> accessed on 28 February 2019. The patronym would (in addition to the reference as « nobilis vir » in the 1434 record below) offer further indication that Antonio and Gabriele were not blood-related: an Antonio son of Bernardo has been identified in this period for the San Tomà branch of the Condulmer family, not the Santa Lucia branch to which Gabriele belonged. I again express appreciation here to Alan Stahl for sharing preliminary insights from his research into the Condulmer family. Pompeo Litta, in his nineteenth century genealogical study, states that Antonio son of Bernardo was the commander of the galleys carrying the Byzantines in 1437, i.e., a confirmation of the patronym, although Litta does not point to his sources. He also indicates without citing sources that Antonio's father Bernardo was a close friend (« amicissimo ») and cousin of Eugenius, the latter reference presumably used in a loose sense of the word. See LITTA, *Condulmero di Venezia*.

¹⁰³ NANETTI, *Il codice Morisini*, vol. II, p. 882.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 918.

and presumably in 1428;¹⁰⁷ as commander of a galley to Flanders in 1429-1430;¹⁰⁸ and as captain of two cogs to Beirut in 1430.¹⁰⁹ Both Morosini and Marin Sanudo record how, in 1431, shortly after Eugenius's accession, the Pope dispatched Antonio Condulmer from Rome to Venice with a large sum of money to procure three shiploads of wheat for Rome given the food shortages there, and to arm and command the galleys on the journey there – a first recorded instance of Gabriele Condulmer drawing on Antonio's services.¹¹⁰

Morosini also registers Antonio Condulmer as a commander of galley that formed part of a heavily armed guard fleet involved in a military engagement in 1432 against a Genoese flotilla which had been raiding Venetian-held islands in the Ionian and Aegean seas.¹¹¹ The Venetian galleys sailed up to Pera in pursuit of the enemy ships, intending to strike at the Genoese colony across from Constantinople. Emperor John VIII had to intervene personally to avert bloodshed in the Byzantine harbour.¹¹²

In February 1433, the Senate informed Pietro Loredan, captain general of the armed fleet that year, that Eugenius IV had had two galleys armed and outfitted at his expense, to strengthen Loredan's forces. The Senate instructions identify Antonio Condulmer and Alvise Bembo (whom we will encounter again on the

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., vol. II, 1097. For the same year, the *coche Condulmaria* – i.e., presumably the cog commanded by Antonio Condulmer, following the convention of naming a ship after its captain – is mentioned in instructions given by the Senate on 2 April 1425 to the commander general of a large Venetian guard fleet, Fantin Michiel: the *Condulmaria* is to join the armed fleet in an expedition in the Aegean, part of the conflict between Venice and the Ottomans over control of Thessalonica. See JOHN R. MELVILLE-JONES, *Venice and Thessalonica 1423-1430: The Venetian Documents*, Unipress, Padua 2002 (Archivio del litorale adriatico, 7), p. 102-103, citing ASV, Senato, Secreta, reg. 9, fol. 5r-8v.

¹⁰⁶ NANETTI, *Il codice Morosini*, vol. III, p. 1191-1192 and 1226.

¹⁰⁷ Morosini speaks of a « Chondolmera » active in September 1428, see Ibid., p. 1293.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., vol. III, pp. 1415, 1418, 1422, including commendable service during an attack by Catalan raiders.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., vol. III, p. 1426. Marin Sanudo says three cogs, to Beirut and Alessandria: SANUDO, *Le vite dei dogi*, p. 103-104.

¹¹⁰ SANUDO, *Le vite dei Dogi*, p. 95. NANETTI, *Il codice Morosini*, vol. III, p. 1519.

¹¹¹ NANETTI, *Il codice Morosini*, vol. III, p. 1643-1645. An Alvise Bembo, probably the same person by that name who was also on the 1437 mission, was another galley commander on this convoy, and was recognized by the state for meritorious service in this military engagement, see below.

¹¹² Important details of this engagement come from a single source, an anonymous *enkionion* about Emperor John VIII Paleologos, translated and discussed in PETER SCHREINER, « Venezianer und Genuesen während der ersten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts in Konstantinopel (1432-1434) », *Studi Veneziani*, 12 (1970), p. 357-368. Morosini gives some details but the narrative is not easy to reconstruct. SANUDO, *Le vite dei Dogi*, also gives references (for example, p. 598-599) which underline the significance of the engagement, and includes Antonio Condulmer in the list of commanders who were involved (p. 108), but the events are scattered throughout the text and here, too, the chronology is hard to establish without reference to the Greek source published by Schreiner.

1437 mission to Constantinople, see below) as the respective galley commanders.¹¹³ And in 1434, Antonio son of Bernardo Condulmer is recorded in Venetian acts as having met the age requirement of at least 30 years to serve as commander of one of the commercial galleys to Flanders,¹¹⁴ a verification process instituted in Venice in 1430.

From the chronology, it seems highly probable that all these were milestones in the career of one and the same person. They would show that, in addition to his (non-blood related) family ties to Eugenius, Antonio son of Bernardo Condulmer brought extensive naval and military experience to the papal mission of 1437, including experience in Constantinople.

Arriving in Constantinople in 1437, Antonio Condulmer displayed an aggressive approach that shocked the Greeks. When the Basel convoy appeared some days after the Venetian fleet, he prepared to attack it right there and then in the harbour. He had to be restrained by Emperor John VIII himself – a remarkable echo of the stand-off with the Genoese fleet in 1432.¹¹⁵ Condulmer claimed that he was under instruction to engage in battle with Basel galleys wherever he would find them, as they were enemies of the Pope.¹¹⁶ Eugenius's orders were broad but did not, in fact, mention initiating military engagement.¹¹⁷ All the more so, Antonio's actions suggest a fierce loyalty to Eugenius. In a separate, and unconfirmed instance implying both Antonio and Marco Condulmer in an alleged act of violence, a herald of the Council majority who had boarded their convoy in Crete had reportedly been tortured and killed during the voyage. The matter was brought to the attention of the Byzantine Emperor, who stated that upon investigation it appeared that the man had been taken back to Venice for trial, not murdered by either of the Condulmers.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ ASV, Senato, Secreti, reg. 12, fol. 69v, instructions of 23 February 1432 (*more veneto*, i.e. 1433).

¹¹⁴ ASV, Avogaria di comun, Prove di età per patroni di galere e altre cariche, reg. 177–1, fol. 60v: « Vir nobilis ser Antonius Condelmario quondam ser Bernardi qui vadit patroni Flandri probant etatem annorum XXX complitis ».

¹¹⁵ LAURENT, *Les 'Mémoires'*, p. 176. Also reported by John of Ragusa: CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CLXXVIII, and by Rodrigo of Braga, see HOFMANN, « Rodrigo, Dekan von Braga », p. 179. The Spanish traveller Pero Tafur, who encountered the Basel convoy in Chios on their return journey, also heard that the two convoys had almost come to blows in the harbour of Constantinople: PERO TAFUR, *Travels and Adventures 1435–1439*, trans. and ed. MALCOLM LETTS, Routledge, London 1926 (The Broadway travelers), p. 110–112. Tafur was also an eye-witness to the departure of the Venetian convoy from Constantinople on 25 November 1437, *Ibid.*, p. 125, with on board John VIII and Cusanus.

¹¹⁶ LAURENT, *Les 'Mémoires'*, p. 177, 179. The variant manuscript tradition designated by Laurent as « B » provides a few additional details of interest on this stand-off, including the note that it took two days to calm the parties down, and the names of the two harbours to which the Emperor assigned the convoys to separate them, see *Ibid.*, p. 609, 611.

¹¹⁷ See the already cited letter of Eugenius of 6 July 1437, CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CXL.

¹¹⁸ Reported by John of Ragusa, in CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CLXXVIII, and by the Bishops of Viseu and Lausanne, in *Ibid.*, doc. CLXXIX. Mentioned by GILL, *Council of Florence*, p. 82.

Just like Garatone, Antonio Condulmer continued to be engaged in senior executive functions in Eugenius's eastern policy after 1437. He was appointed as commander of the papal convoy that brought the Byzantines (accompanied by Garatone, see above) back to Constantinople after the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1439.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, in 1444, Antonio commanded a galley in the heavily armed fleet dispatched by Eugenius under the overall leadership of Cardinal Francesco Condulmer.¹²⁰ This was part of a major military campaign against the Ottomans, Eugenius's long-awaited crusade against the Turks.¹²¹

Ettore Pasqualigo, galley commander

The unpublished sixteenth century chronicle of the Venetian Stefano Magno identifies Ettore Pasqualigo as one of the three *sopracomiti* under Antonio Condulmer.¹²² He was in command of what a number of other sources refer to as

¹¹⁹ Attested by Michael of Rhodes, who served as lower-ranking officer on the same convoy. See PAMELA O. LONG, DAVID MCGEE, ALAN STAHL (eds.), *The Book of Michael of Rhodes. A Fifteenth Century Maritime Manuscript*, vol. 2: *Transcription and Translation*, MIT Press, Cambridge – London 2009, p. 278 (fol. 93b of the manuscript). Antonio Condulmer, son of the late Bernardo, is identified as the commander of this convoy in an unpublished record of payments to the officers and crew of the 1439 mission to Constantinople: ASV, Santo Spirito, Pergamene, fol. 4r. I thank Alan Stahl for sharing images of this manuscript with me.

¹²⁰ Excerpt from the Senate decision in FREDDY THIRIET, *Régestes des Délibérations du Sénat de Venise concernant la Roumanie*, vol. III, Mouton, Paris – The Hague 1961, no. 2638, p. 109. The full text of the decision identifies him as « Antonio Condulmer maior », that is, with an epithet rather than a patronym, suggesting that by 1444 at the latest he had enjoyed a recognized reputation (possibly because of his naval engagements), and no longer needed identification as someone's son. See ASV, Senato, Mar, reg. 1, fol. 226v. Names of commanders also listed by SANUDO, *Le vite dei Dogi*, p. 398. Also serving as galley commander in this fleet was Nicolò Contarini, son of Gasparino, who was probably on the 1437 mission, see below.

¹²¹ The convoy did not manage to meet up with the land-based troops under the command of Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini, and the campaign ended in disaster for the Christian army at Varna. Among the extensive literature on the crusade of Varna, see SETTON, *The Papacy and the Levant*, vol. II, p. 82–90, and IMBER, *The Crusade of Varna*, passim.

¹²² STEFANO MAGNO, *Annali veneti*, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek [hereinafter: ÖNB], Cod. Vind. 6214, fol. 74r: « Adi 4 Maggio [1437; presumably an error, as the decrees were adopted in Basel only on 7 May] uenne a Venetia dal Concilio Simon da Vale [Venetian ambassador to the Council of Basel] con un Tedesco [i.e., Cusanus], et un Francese [i.e. the Bishop of Digne], et un Portoghese [i.e. the Bishop of Porto], Ambasciatori del Concilio, per montar sopra la galera, patron di quello Ettore Pasqualigo, armata delli danari del Papa ». For a discussion of the value of Magno's chronicle as historical source on the Council of Ferrara-Florence, see SEBASTIAN KOLDITZ, « The Council of Ferrara-Florence as Reflected in Venetian Chronicles: Preliminary Observations », in SEBASTIAN KOLDITZ, MARKUS KOLLER (eds.), *The Byzantine-Ottoman Transition in Venetian Chronicles – La transizione bizantino-ottomana nelle cronache veneziane*, Viella, Rome 2018 (Venetiana. Centro tedesco di studi veneziani, 19), p. 197–234, in particular p. 216–219. Marin Sanudo also records a Pasqualigo in the role of *sopracomito*, but does not have accurate information about the first name: SANUDO, *Le vite dei Dogi*, p. 617. Sanudo

the *galea bastarda*, an intermediate type galley, in contrast to the other three, which are identified as *galee grosse*. The *Pasqualiga* travelled separately from the other galleys both to and back from Constantinople.¹²³ Presumably because of its greater speed, Pasqualigo's vessel played a particular role in the Pope's shuttle diplomacy of those months. It was his galley that transported Cristoforo Garatone and the Bishops of Digne and Porto in advance of the other three ships, stopping in Crete to arrange and pay for the crossbowmen that would be picked up by the other galleys for the city's protection, and arriving first in Constantinople.¹²⁴ It was also Pasqualigo who left Constantinople a week before the others, departing on 19 November 1437, carrying with him as yet unidentified members of the Greek court, and arriving in Venice on 23 December.¹²⁵ On board Pasqualigo's galley on the return voyage was the papal financier Michele Zono, who was quickly dispatched to Bologna after alighting in Venice to bring news to the Pope of the decision of the Byzantine.¹²⁶ It was the swiftness of Pasqualigo and Zono that allowed Eugenius, based on the news from Constantinople, to declare the transfer of the Council from Basel to Ferrara as early as 30 December 1437, well before the Byzantine principals arrived in Venice in February.

correctly calls him Ettore Pasqualigo later on, in connection with the return to Venice, *Ibid.*, p. 622.

¹²³ Among other sources mentioning the type of galleys prepared at the request of Eugenius, and their different departure dates, see the information sent to the Venetian envoy to Emperor Sigismund on 12 August 1437, cited in IORGA, *Notes et extraits*, vol. III, p. 16. John of Ragusa reports the arrival in Constantinople, on 3 September 1437, of a *galea dicta bastarda* carrying the three bishops: CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CLXXVIII. Ragusa does not identify the commander. The Bishop of Digne, in his report of 1438, speaks of his journey on a *galea subtile*, also without mentioning the commander. He states that it departed from Venice on 26 July, stayed for four days in Crete, and arrived in Constantinople on 3 September: CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CLXXXVIII. For a chronological overview of the comings and goings of the galleys, see annex 1 to this paper. Partial discussions in GILL, *Council of Florence*, p. 79–83, and KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 63–66. On Venetian galleys in general, including brief references to the *galea bastarda* type, see LANE, *Ships and Shipbuilders*.

¹²⁴ See the sources quoted in the previous note.

¹²⁵ Stefano Magno's chronicle reports the arrival in Venice on 23 December 1437 of Pasqualigo, Michele Zono and an unspecified number of members of John VIII's household: ÖNB, Cod. Vind. 6214, fol. 76r. Marin Sanudo mentions the arrival of Ettore Pasqualigo in Venice twice. In the first, he explicitly refers to Michiel Zen or Zon, « nonzio del Papa », arriving on the *gallia Pasqualiga* and hastening on from Venice to brief the Pope, see SANUDO, *Le Vite dei Dogi*, p. 150. In the second instance, Sanudo mistakenly dates the arrival to 28 December, and does not mention Zono, but specifies that on board the galley commanded by Ettore Pasqualigo were 70 persons affiliated with the Emperor *Ibid.*, p. 622. See also IORGA, *Notes et extraits*, vol. III, p. 22, fn.5, citing Magno as well as other chronicles.

¹²⁶ Not previously pointed out in the literature: it was Michele Zono who carried a letter from John VIII to Eugenius IV, the only known correspondence from the Emperor to the Pope. The letter has been preserved. See further below, under the discussion of Michele Zono.

An Ettore Pasqualigo son of Giovanni, of the *contrada* of Santa Marina, appears at least twice in the protocols and registers of the Venetian notary Vettore Pomino.¹²⁷ One of these entries, from 1442, places Pasqualigo alongside Michele Zono as an adjudicator in a case that involved Cristoforo Garatone as a third party. This strongly suggests that the Ettore of the 1437 mission was indeed the son of Giovanni. In any event, no evidence of persons named Ettore Pasqualigo with another patronym appears in this period, and the positions held are internally consistent with the career of one person. It is therefore highly likely that all the references mentioned here are to one and the same Ettore Pasqualigo.

In 1418, Ettore Pasqualigo son of Giovanni married Elisabetta Zon, or Zono.¹²⁸ She was the daughter of Pietro Zono, who in turn was a cousin of the aforementioned Michele Zono, financier of the 1437 mission.¹²⁹ Ettore Pasqualigo is attested in the Morosini chronicle, among other instances, as galley commander of the Flanders fleet for 1422–1423.¹³⁰ In 1425, Ettore son of Giovanni Pasqualigo was a successful bidder in the auction to operate one of the three Venetian state-owned galleys to *Romania*.¹³¹ He would have therefore commanded a ship to Constantinople, and possibly beyond, to Tana on the Sea of Azov, or Trebizond on the Black Sea, from late 1425 to early 1426.¹³² As noted, Cristoforo

¹²⁷ ASV, Cancelleria inferiore, Notai, b. 148, [1433–1438], fol. 63v, and *Ibid.*, [1435–1443], fol. 29v–30v. KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, draws, among other sources, on the protocols of this notary to reconstruct the financial transactions in the period 1437–1438 involving Zono and Balthasar Lupari, see below.

¹²⁸ Noted from an index of marriages at the Archivio di Stato di Venezia, which draws on the register of the Avogaria di comun, *Matrimoni patrizi per nome di donna*, as well as other sources: see GIUSEPPE GIOMO (ed.), *Indice per nome di donna dei matrimoni dei Patrizi veneti*, 086 ter/II (M–Z), p. 513, available online at <<http://www.archiviodistatovenezia.it/siasve/cgi-bin/pagina.pl?Tipo=inventario&Chiave=792>>, accessed on 1 October 2019.

¹²⁹ EMMANUELE ANTONIO CICOĞNA, *Genealogia della nobile famiglia Veneziana Zon pubblicata da Emmanuele A. Cicogna per festeggiare le nozze Marcello – Zon*, Venice 1858. The connection between Elisabetta and Michele Zono is derived from comparing the three genealogical trees in this publication. Cicogna refers to the marriage of Elisabetta to Ettore Pasqualigo, but appears to be mistaken in calling him son of Marco. The Zono family did not, at that point, belong to the patriciate, but some of its members, such as Elisabetta Zono here and Michele Zono himself, appear to have married « up ».

¹³⁰ NANETTI, *Il codice Morosini*, vol. III, p. 936, 938, 941–944, the latter page identifying the « galia nostra Pasqualiga » of the other entries as being under the command of Ettore Pasqualigo.

¹³¹ THIRIET, *Régestes*, vol. II, no. 1988, p. 227–228. Thiriet does not provide the patronym, but the full Senate record identifies him as « quondam ser Johannis ». So also Morosini for this same auction: « el nobel homo sier Ettore Pasqualigo fo de misier Zane », see NANETTI, *Il codice Morosini*, vol. III, p. 1056–1057.

¹³² For the *incanto* system, see LANE, *A Maritime Republic*, p. 129–130, and in detail: DORIS STÖCKLY, *Le système de l'incanto des galées du marché a Venise (fin XIIIe-milieu XVe siècle)*, Brill, Leiden 1995 (The Medieval Mediterranean, 5). Among a rich literature on Venetian interests in Tana and the Black Sea, see, for example, BERNARD DOUMERC, « Les Vénitiens à la Tana au XVe siècle », *Le Moyen Âge*, 94 (1988), p. 363–379; SERGHEI KARPOV, « On the origin of medieval Tana » in Στεφανος, *Studia*

Garatone worked in Constantinople as chancellor to the Venetian *bailo* in this period, raising the possibility that they met there. The account book of the Venetian merchant Giacomo Badoer, which he maintained during his residence in Constantinople from 1436 to 1440, registers a small purchase of ship's netting by Ettore Pasqualigo in 1437, presumably at the time of the papal mission.¹³³ Pasqualigo went on to serve in a large number of functions between 1440 and 1469, including as Venetian bailo in Trebizond in 1441, and rising to Duke of Crete in 1455.¹³⁴

Ettore Pasqualigo, in short, was another commander who offered prior naval experience, including to Constantinople, and who continued to be associated after 1437 with one or more members of the mission, one of whom – Zono – he was directly connected to by marriage.

Alvise Bembo, galley commander

A further galley commander is identified, among other sources, by Stefano Magno's chronicle¹³⁵, by the anonymous chronicle known as the *Diarii veneti*,¹³⁶ and by one of the officers serving on the same ship, Michael of Rhodes. Michael states of himself in his unique handbook that he served in 1437 as a *comito* – master of the oarsmen – on the papal galley under the nobleman Alvise Bembo, part of the fleet commanded by Antonio Condulmer on the mission to transport the Greek Emperor from Constantinople.¹³⁷ A Lodovico (the equivalent of Alvise in Venetian naming conventions) Bembo – without patronym – is mentioned in

bizantina ac slavica Vladimíro Vavřínek dedicata (Byzantinoslavica), 56/1 (1995), p. 227–235. See also further below for references on Venice's trade activities in Constantinople and beyond, fn. 156.

¹³³ GIACOMO BADOER, *Il libro dei conti di Giacomo Badoer (Costantinopoli 1436–1440)*, eds. UMBERTO DORINI, TOMMASO BERTELÈ, Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, Rome 1956 (Il nuovo Ramusio, 3), p. 319 and 326. See also the indices to Badoer, published separately: GIACOMO BERTELÈ (ed.), *Il libro dei conti di Giacomo Badoer (Costantinopoli 1436–1440). Complemento e indici*, Esedra, Padua 2002 (Numismatica Patavina, 2).

¹³⁴ BENJAMIN KOHL, ANDREA MOZZATO, MONIQUE O'CONNELL, *The Rulers of Venice, 1332–1524*, <www.rulersofvenice.org>, records 17123 and 16524, accessed on 1 October 2019. His career after 1454 is sketched in TESSA BEVERLY, « Venetian ambassadors 1454–94: an Italian elite », Ph.D. Diss. University of Warwick 1999, p. 344.

¹³⁵ ÖNB, Cod. Vind. 6214, fol. 74r: « Parti giorni 15 avanti le altre con Ambasciatori uno del Papa, l'altro dell'Imperator; Le altri partirono di Agosto, Capitano Antonio Condulmero, Sopracomiti Nicolo Contarini; et Alvise Bembo ».

¹³⁶ Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Lat. cod. 6205, fol. 102v. He is identified as being from the *confinio* of San Salvador. The entry is for May 1437, suggesting that Alvise Bembo (and Nicolò Contarini, who is also mentioned) may have already been identified for a command role at that time.

¹³⁷ LONG, MCGEE, STAHL (eds.), *The Book of Michael of Rhodes*, p. 278 (fol. 93a). The studies in volume III of this edition do not discuss Alvise Bembo, but provide extensive background information on Venetian seafaring.

three entries in the ledgers of the *Camera Apostolica*, in May 1438, in connection with reimbursements for his role as *patron* of one the galleys that transported the Greeks; he appears alongside Antonio Condulmer and a third galley commander, Nicolò Contarini (see below).¹³⁸ Morosini reports that Alvise Bembo was, like Antonio Condulmer, a galley captain in the military expedition in Greek waters against the Genoese in 1432, and that he was given a distinction for meritorious service on this mission.¹³⁹ As already noted above, Alvise Bembo was, alongside Antonio Condulmer, commander of one of the two galleys outfitted in 1433 at Eugenius IV's expense to strengthen the Venetian guard fleet.¹⁴⁰ An Alvise Bembo is attested in numerous entries of Giacomo Badoer's account book in Constantinople, for both 1436 and 1437.¹⁴¹ Most importantly, he is referred to there as *patron* of a galley which was there in October 1437, which had travelled there via Crete, and which was not affiliated with any regular fleet. There is little doubt that this was the papal convoy.¹⁴² Badoer refers to him at times as son of

¹³⁸ See IORGA, *Notes et extraits*, vol. III, p. 8. Briefly noted by both KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 251, and THIERRY GANCHOU, « Le rachat des Notaras après la chute de Constantinople, ou les relations 'étrangères' de l'élite byzantine au XVe siècle », in MICHEL BALARD, ALAIN DUCELLIER (eds.), *Migrations et diasporas méditerranéennes (Xe–XVIe siècle): actes du colloque du Conques, octobre 1999*, Publications de la Sorbonne, Paris 2002, p. 149ff. One of three entries in the apostolic accounts notes that the payments to Bembo and Contarini were « pro galeis Tanas », implying that they commanded not galleys of the papal convoy, but rather those of the regular *Romania* mercantile fleet. Kolditz and Ganchou follow Iorga in this interpretation. However, in light of the unambiguous identification by Stefano Magno and the *Diarii veneti*, as well as the statement by Michael of Rhodes that Bembo was his commander on the special papal convoy, this cannot be correct. Further evidence is in the *Libro dei conti* of Giacomo Badoer, which identifies the commander of the *Romania* fleet for 1437 rather as Zorzi Soranzo, with galley commanders Aluvixe Contarini, Aluvixe Diedo and Zacaria Donado, see BERTELÈ (ed.), *Badoer. Complemento e indici*, p. 77, s.v. *galia de Romania*.

¹³⁹ NANETTI, *Il codice Morosini*, vol. III, p. 1643.

¹⁴⁰ See above, fn. 113.

¹⁴¹ Aluvixe (Alvise) Bembo is mentioned almost 40 times, including in the following few examples, all from BADOER, *Libro dei conti*, p. 4, Aluvixe *fo de ser Bianco*, in Constantinople in 1436; p. 46, letter of exchange, November 1436; p. 55, letter of exchange, Aluvixe *fo de ser Bianco*, November 1436; p. 248, Aluvixe *fo de ser Bianco*, October 1437, this entry also identifies a Piero Vendilin as his *homo de chonseio* and a Donà Oxelo as his scribe, thereby adding yet two more identifiable names to the crew of the 1437 convoy; pp. 250 and 302, loading merchandise destined for Venice, 21 November 1437, which was possibly an infraction of the Senate's instructions of 30 July 1437 not to compete with the regular commercial fleet to *Romania*, see ASV, Senato, Misti, reg. 60, fol. 28v.

¹⁴² BADOER, *Libro dei conti*, p. 256. Crossbowmen were not the only cargo that Alvise picked up in Candia on the way to Constantinople: Badoer records the purchase from Alvise, in October 1437, of 27 *bote* of Cretan wine. This was another possible violation of the directive not to create competition for the regular *Romania* fleet, see previous footnote. Badoer sold some of the wine to the scribes of the *galie di Provenzai*, see *Ibid.*, p. 178. This was undoubtedly, and ironically, the convoy of the Basel majority, under the command of the Governor of Nice (Provence), Nicod the Menthon; Sanudo also calls them the *galie d'i Provenzalli*, see NANETTI, *Le vite dei Dogi*, p. 145. For

Bianco, therefore securely identifying his patronym. 'Bianco' was a nickname: in 1428, an Alvise Bembo, son of the late « Laurentius dicti Blanco », was formally presented for the *Balla d'Oro*, the annual lottery to enter the Great Council before the age of twenty-five.¹⁴³

An entry into a Venetian state account dated April 1443 refers to a payment to Alvise Bembo as commander of a galley of the Pope,¹⁴⁴ possibly part of the preparations for Eugenius's crusade against the Turks, as this account related to numerous other related dealings.¹⁴⁵ (It is not certain, however, whether he ultimately took part in the crusade of 1444, as his name does not appear in the list of persons to be appointed for command of a Venetian galley in March of that year).¹⁴⁶ Other assignments after 1437 included command of Venice's armed fleet in the Adriatic and Aegean – the *galere del Golfo* – in 1446,¹⁴⁷ command of the *galere di Barberia* in 1447,¹⁴⁸ and of a smaller, ad hoc guard fleet in 1448.¹⁴⁹

It may be concluded that in 1437, Alvise Bembo – like Antonio Condulmer and Ettore Pasqualigo – had been to Constantinople before; that he had previously commanded a galley outfitted by Eugenius IV; that he had sailed alongside Antonio Condulmer on at least two occasions; and that after 1437 he returned to serve on at least one further major papal mission involving Venetian galleys.

Nicolò Contarini, galley commander

The identification of the fourth and final galley commander, Nicolò Contarini, is also based on the chronicle of Stefano Magno¹⁵⁰ as well as the account books of the Apostolic Chamber.¹⁵¹ Neither of these sources, again, provide a patronym. The Contarini were a particularly large family, and the records show multiple persons named Nicolò at that time, making a positive identification more difficult

an account of that convoy's preparation and journey (not including Cretan wine), see WILLY COHN, « Die Basler Konzilsflotte des Jahres 1437 », *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, 12 (1913), p. 16–52.

¹⁴³ ASV, Avogaria di comun, Balla d'Oro, reg. 162-I, fol. 196r. The identification of Alvise's father as Bianco Bembo was already posited by GANCHOU, « Le rachat des Notaras », p. 183, but without the evidence provided above.

¹⁴⁴ ASV, Collegio, Notatorio, reg. 8, fol. 180v.

¹⁴⁵ See REINHOLD C. MUELLER, *The Venetian Money Market. Banks, Panics, and the Public Debt, 1200–1500*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore – London 1997, p. 197, fn. 143.

¹⁴⁶ ASV, Senato, Mar, reg. 1, fol. 226v for 23 March 1444, cited above in connection with the appointment of Antonio Condulmer on this mission.

¹⁴⁷ BENJAMIN KOHL, ANDREA MOZZATO, MONIQUE O'CONNELL, *The Rulers of Venice, 1332–1524*, <www.rulersofvenice.org>, record 16885, accessed on 28 February 2019. Record for Ludovico Bembo, son of Bianco.

¹⁴⁸ KOHL ET AL., *The Rulers of Venice*, record 17048, accessed on 28 February 2019.

¹⁴⁹ THIRIET, *Régestes*, vol. III, no. 2765, p. 142–143, for 4 March 1448.

¹⁵⁰ ÖNB, Cod. Vind 6214, fol. 74r, cited above.

¹⁵¹ IORGA, *Notes et extraits*, vol. III, p. 8.

than for the other commanders. A few examples may suffice: a Nicolò Contarini son of Alvise, was attested as being 25 years in 1431, and entered the *Maggior Consiglio* that year. A Nicolò Contarini son of Pietro did so in 1433, and served as bowman on the Beirut fleet in 1434. Morosini mentions a Nicolò son of Girolemo as commanding a cog to Crete in 1423.¹⁵²

Badoer includes numerous entries in his Constantinople account book for a Nicolò Contarini, without patronym, and these may in fact involve two different persons. The first of Badoer's entries is for a galley commander in Constantinople in 1436, a likely match for the galley commander of 1437.¹⁵³ All others relate to a Nicolò Contarini who was not a commander and who seems to have operated frequently out of Salonica. For the period after 1437, a record of the Venetian Senate attests to a Nicolò Contarini son of Gasparino as one of the six galley commanders appointed at the request of Eugenius as part of the military campaign against the Ottomans in 1444,¹⁵⁴ which, as we have seen, also included Antonio Condulmer as *sopracomito*.

If this was the same Nicolò as of the 1437 mission, it would establish a tantalizingly close connection to Eugenius himself: in 1420, Nicolò Contarini son of Gaspare married Caterina Condulmer, daughter of Simone Condulmer, brother of Gabriele, i.e., the later Eugenius IV.¹⁵⁵ In the absence of further information, however, about the patronym of the Nicolò who served as *sopracomito* in 1437, one cannot conclude with certainty that he was, indeed, the husband of the Pope's niece.

Despite some difficulties in identifying Nicolò Contarini, the overall picture that emerges from the biographical details of the commanders is that authority on Eugenius's galleys was in the hands of four Venetian noblemen who had prior and often extensive naval command experience. At least three, and possibly all four, had been to Constantinople before 1437. Eugenius could count on officers who knew the waters of Romania, and who knew what it meant to command a galley. Two of them – Antonio Condulmer and Alvise Bembo – had even served together on a military operation in the seas of Romania, including a near-attack

¹⁵² NANETTI, *Il codice Morosini*, vol. III, p. 1052.

¹⁵³ BADOER, *Libro dei conti*, p. 28

¹⁵⁴ THIRIET, *Régestes*, vol. III, no. 2368, p. 109. Also noted in other sources by IORGA, *Notes et extraits*, vol. III, p. 156–157, fn.1. For the patronym, which these collections do not provide, see the underlying record: ASV, Senato, Mar, reg. 1, fol. 226v.

¹⁵⁵ Noted from an index of marriages at the Archivio di Stato di Venezia, see, see GIOMO (ed.), *Indice per nome di donna*, 086 ter/1 (A–L), p. 121, available online at <<http://www.archiviodistatovenezi.a.it/siasve/cgi-bin/pagina.pl?Tipo=inventario&Chiave=792>>, accessed on 1 October 2019. See also the testament of Nicolo Contarini, son of Gaspare, of the *confinio* of St. Felix, in which he refers to his wife Caterina, without indicating her maiden name, as well as a son Gabriele, perhaps named after Caterina's famous uncle, in ASV, Notarile, Testamenti, b. 923 (notaio Marino de Sori), no. 27, 7 August 1456.

on Pera, in 1432, and subsequently in 1433 on two galleys commissioned and paid for by Pope Eugenius IV as reinforcements of the Venetian guard fleet. One of them – Ettore Pasqualigo – was connected by marriage to one of the financiers, Michele Zono, and may have known Cristoforo Garatone from Constantinople in 1425–1426. Pasqualigo also continued to have some documented relationship to both of them after 1437. There is a possibility that the fourth commander, Nicolò Contarini, was directly connected to Eugenius by marriage. Finally, at least two, and possibly three, of the four commanders took part in the 1444 crusade or its preparations, again in command of Venetian galleys commissioned by the Pope.

V. *The financiers*

The conclusion that Eugenius engaged highly experienced people for the task, including with experience in *Romania*, and people who were already known or affiliated to him, can be established in even greater detail for the two so-called financiers, Michele Zono and Balthasar Lupari. Both can be shown to have had a network in Constantinople that would have been of value on this mission.¹⁵⁶ Striking about their profiles, in addition to their experience in the East, is how rooted they were in Venice and Venetian affairs, and the fact that they were given such critical roles in the geopolitics of their day as non-patricians.

Eugenius tasked them on 7 July 1437 to raise the funds required, in Constantinople and elsewhere, to bring the Greeks to Italy.¹⁵⁷ The commission includes specific references to the costs of the galleys needed for the transport, and of the crossbowmen for the defense of Constantinople. Recent research has provided important new insights into the role of these two men in the myriad transactions in Constantinople, which are also key to understanding the costs of

¹⁵⁶ Among the extensive literature on the Venetian community in Constantinople, and on Venice's trade with, and in, the Byzantine Empire, including in the first half of the *Quattrocento*, see, most recently: ALESSIO SOPRACASA, *Costantinopoli e il Levante negli atti del notaio veneziano Giacomo dalla Torre (1414–1416)*, Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, Venice 2015, notably p. 134–186; NEVRA NECİPOĞLU, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins. Politics and Society in the Late Empire*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2009, in particular p. 184–234; THIERRY GANCHOU, « Giacomo Badoer et Kyr Théodôros Batatzès, 'chomercier di peso' a Constantinople (flor. 1401–1449) », *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 61 (2003), p. 49–95; KLAUS-PETER MATSCHKE, « Some Merchant Families in Constantinople Before, During and After the Fall of the City 1453 », *Balkan Studies*, 38/2 (1997), p. 119–238; and NICOLAS OIKONOMIDES, *Hommes d'affaires grecs et latins à Constantinople (XIIIe–XVe siècles)*, Institut d'études médiévales Albert-le-Grand – J. Vrin, Montreal – Paris 1979 (Conférence Albert le Grand, 1977). These and other studies underline the interconnectedness between the Italian, Byzantine and other communities, including Jews and Muslims. With the exception of SOPRACASA, *Giacomo dalla Torre*, who briefly refers to Michele Zono (p. 471–472), these studies do not mention the two merchants of interest here (but see literature references for KOLDITZ and HALFF).

¹⁵⁷ CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CXLI; HOFMANN, *Epistolae pontificiae*, no. 77.

the Council of Ferrara-Florence overall.¹⁵⁸ While the financial intricacies in Venice and Constantinople, and thereafter in Ferrara and Florence, are still not fully understood, it is clear that the two men were not bankers in any modern sense. Instead, the records show a diversity of transactions in which they sometimes put up some amounts of money themselves, but more frequently acted as middlemen between various Venetian lenders in Constantinople and the papal treasury, through the use of letters of exchange.¹⁵⁹ Their use would have required trusted, personal contacts in Constantinople.

Michele Zono

Of the two, Michele Zono, a non-noble Venetian,¹⁶⁰ appears to have had the most active role in the financial matters, handling very large sums, including in cash, to cover the expenses of the papal convoy, the costs of the Cretan crossbowmen, as well as the living expenses of the Greek officials traveling to Italy. But Zono did more than handle finances. He travelled on the *galea Pasqualiga* that returned to Venice before the others, almost certainly carrying a letter from John VIII to Eugenius IV, in which he informed the Pope that he would embark on the papal galleys within a few days of writing.¹⁶¹ The letter was a critical development, and from Venice Zono left immediately for Bologna to deliver the news to Eugenius.¹⁶² While John VIII may not have felt committed to one council location or another before his arrival in Italy,¹⁶³ the missive significantly strengthened Eugenius'

¹⁵⁸ Kolditz has followed the money in the archival records in great depth, including the roles of Zono, Lupari and Garatone, see KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, in particular p. 244–254, thereby expanding on notices gathered earlier by IORGA, *Notes et extraits*, vol. III, p. 5–7, and on the study by JOSEPH GILL, « The Cost of the Council of Florence », in JOSEPH GILL, *Personalities of the Council of Florence and other Essays*, Barnes & Noble, New York 1964, p. 186–203. Balthasar Lupari's life and career, and his connection to Nicholas of Cusa, have been traced in detail in HALFF, « Did Nicholas of Cusa Talk with Muslims? ».

¹⁵⁹ KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 250 and 254. Eugenius' commission of 7 July 1437 referred to such letters of exchange, see note above.

¹⁶⁰ He often appears in the records related to the Council of Ferrara-Florence as Michele, Michaelae or Michiel Zeno, suggesting a heritage from one of the patrician families of Venice. But it has been established that his family name was Zono, that is, from a non-noble line. See KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 246. The family was later elevated to patrician status, see CICOGNA, *Genealogia della nobile famiglia Veneziana Zon*.

¹⁶¹ The letter, published in HOFMANN, « Rodrigo, Dekan von Braga », p. 186, was cited above. It is dated 18 November 1437, a day before Pasqualigo's and Zono's departure. The Emperor refers explicitly to Michele Zono and praises him. This is the only extant letter from the Emperor to the Pope. The connection between this letter and the journey of Zono on Pasqualigo's galley has not been previously noted.

¹⁶² ÖNB, Cod. Vind. 6214, fol. 76r.

¹⁶³ GILL, *Council of Florence*, p. 102, and DECALUWÉ, *Successful Defeat*, p. 281, discuss the continuing hesitations of the Byzantines after their arrival, in light of the divisions between the Pope and the Council in Basel. See also VERA ANDRIOPOULOU, « The Logistics of a Union: Diplomatic

hand in the conflict with the Council of Basel. On 30 December 1437, Eugenius issued the bull *Pridem ex justis*, boasting that John VIII was on his way in one of the Pope's galleys, and reaffirming Eugenius's earlier decision to transfer the Council of Basel to Ferrara.¹⁶⁴ Within days, the Council of Ferrara opened.¹⁶⁵ The fact that such a politically vital dispatch was given to Zono speaks of the trust he must have enjoyed by both the Emperor and the Pope. Indeed, in the letter, John VIII singles out Zono for his reliability as source of information, pointing to the fact that he knew him personally.

An earlier connection between Zono and Eugenius, as well as between Zono and Cristoforo Garatone, is documented for 1435. In that year, the Pope appointed him as *scutifer honoris* and as *familiaris*, honorific titles designating him as « shieldbearer » and as member of the papal household. The relevant act was drafted by none other than Cristoforo Garatone.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, Michele Zono had extensive experience in *Romania* and the Black Sea area. In 1408, Zono was appointed as agent for a relative's business in Tana and other parts of *Romania*.¹⁶⁷ Records attest to his presence again in Tana in 1413 and 1414,¹⁶⁸ and then in Constantinople in 1417.¹⁶⁹ Further archival records indicate that Zono was in Constantinople in 1426 and 1427.¹⁷⁰ It is therefore possible that he met Garatone at that time, then chancellor of the Venetian *bailo*. A close affiliation to the office of the *bailo*, and indeed instances in which Zono represented Venetian state interests of the highest order, is attested for in subsequent years: in April 1430, we find him on a mission to the Ottoman Sultan in Adrianople at the request of the *bailo*, authorized to negotiate a deal with the Turks in connection with their siege of Venetian-held Thessalonica, a last-minute effort that did not avert the Ottoman take-over.¹⁷¹ And in 1431, Zono was one of the four witnesses on the

Communication through the Eyes of Sylvester Syropoulos », in KONDYLI et al., *Sylvester Syropoulos*, p. 49–67, for the argument that it was not until John VIII's arrival in Italy that the Emperor truly committed to the papal invitation.

¹⁶⁴ Eugenius' bull in CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CLXX. Discussed in GILL, *Council of Florence*, p. 94–95.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 94–97; DECALUWÉ, *Successful Defeat*, p. 282–283.

¹⁶⁶ KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 247–248.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 246. The record identifies him as *Micaelo Zono quondam ser Nicolai confinii Sancte Marine*.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 246.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 247.

¹⁷⁰ For July 1426: a transaction recorded in Constantinople and witnessed by Francesco Filelfo, albeit no longer as chancellor of the *bailo*: ASV, Duca di Candia, b.1, fasc. 13, fol. 19v. (This would also suggest that Zono and Filelfo knew each other). In September 1427, Zono appears as witness in a case reported by another chancellor of the *bailo* (not Cristoforo Garatone): ASV, Duca di Candia, b.1, fasc. 13, fol. 40v. While the activities of Filelfo in Constantinople lie beyond the scope of this paper, the above-cited manuscript of 1426 in the fondo of the *Duca di Candia* in Venice adds a new fragment to the extensive discussion in GANCHOU, « *Les ultimae voluntates* ».

¹⁷¹ IORGA, *Notes et extraits*, vol. I, p. 516–518. Iorga summarizes the official instructions to the Venetian captain-general which refer to Zono's presence in Adrianople, but gives an incorrect source: this should read ASV, Senato, Secreti, reg. 11 (1429–1431), fol. 102v, (not Senato, Misti,

Venetian side to the extension of the state treaty between Venice and Byzantium, prepared and signed in Constantinople.¹⁷² He is mentioned once in the account book of Giacomo Badoer, placing him in Constantinople in November 1436.¹⁷³

Some time in or before 1440, Eugenius rewarded Zono for his services by awarding him the honorific title of *comes palatinus* or palatine count.¹⁷⁴ Zono reprised his role as financial middle-man for the Pope in the preparations for Eugenius's crusade against the Ottomans in 1444 and in the years that followed the defeat at Varna, again handling large sums of money, including withdrawals of cash from Venetian banks, often in collaboration with Cristoforo Garatone.¹⁷⁵ An inscription at the church of Sant'Andrea della Certosa in Venice, now lost, commissioned by a descendant of Zono in 1544, celebrated Zono's role in supporting Eugenius's 1444 expedition against the Turks, underlining his status as *comes palatinus*.¹⁷⁶

As noted above, Ettore Pasqualigo was married to Michele Zono's cousin's daughter. The records show a continued commercial connection between Pasqualigo and Zono after 1437. Among other evidence, Zono took on a commission as agent of Ettore Pasqualigo and others in 1440,¹⁷⁷ and served on an arbitration panel with him in 1442.¹⁷⁸ Zono must also have remained in very close contact with Garatone: Zono inherited manuscripts from Garatone's library after the latter's death in 1448, manuscripts which eventually entered into the Vatican collection.¹⁷⁹ In addition to attesting to a very close relationship, Garatone's gesture suggests that Zono was highly literate, possibly even speaking Greek.

reg. 57, fol. 101–102). For the Venetian domination of Thessalonica from 1423–1430 and the Ottoman conquest in 1430 see, NECIPOĞLU, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, p. 103–115; NICOL, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium*, p. 347–350, and in detail, SETTON, *Papacy and the Levant*, vol. II, p. 44–81.

¹⁷² Text in GEORG THOMAS, RICCARDO PREDELLI (eds.), *Diplomatarium Veneto-Levanticum*, vol. II, Venice 1899, p. 346. The treaty is discussed in DONALD M. NICOL, *Byzantium and Venice. A Study in Diplomatic and Cultural Relations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1988, p. 373.

¹⁷³ BADOER, *Libro dei conti*, p. 66. He appears as « Michiel Zion ».

¹⁷⁴ Eugenius addresses him as such in October 1440, see HOFMANN, *Epistolae Pontificiae*, vol. III, no. 244, p. 21. Also KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 256.

¹⁷⁵ See MUELLER, *The Venetian Money Market*, p. 197–198. Also (among other references to his financial role): IORGA, *Notes et extraits*, vol. II, p. 22–26, and, for 1445, vol. III, p. 203. Furthermore, THIRIET, *Délibérations*, no. 1406, p. 178 (14 September 1445).

¹⁷⁶ EMMANUELE ANTONIO CICOGNA, *Delle iscrizioni Veneziane*, vol. II, Giuseppe Picotti, Venice 1827, p. 89. Cicogna underlines the close bond between Zono and Eugenius, drawing on a further source to highlight his status as *scutifer* of the Pope.

¹⁷⁷ ASV, Cancelleria inferiore, Notai, b. 149 (Vettore Pomino), 1439–1442, fol. 54v, dated 30 August 1440.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 1435–1443, fol. 29v–30v, dated 3 December 1442. The case involved property of Jacob Ziera, late Bishop of Corone, and immediate predecessor of Cristoforo Garatone in that role, who is also mentioned in the process as a third party.

¹⁷⁹ KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 256.

Balthasar Lupari

For Balthasar Lupari, who, like Zono was deeply involved in the financial support for the undertaking, there is also ample evidence of being well connected to Constantinople and its residents.¹⁸⁰ One such piece of evidence is provided by Cusanus, in a brief personal glimpse from his days in Constantinople.¹⁸¹ Cusanus refers to him by name in his preface to the *Cribratio Alkorani*, as a source of information on Muslims.¹⁸² Lupari had turned to Cusanus to help a group of thirteen eminent Turks in Constantinople who wished to convert and become «fully instructed» by the Pope in Rome, if transportation could be made available to them. The anecdote suggests that Lupari moved in networks of not just Western merchants. There is further evidence that Lupari was a frequent visitor of Constantinople, and probably a longer-term resident at times. A notarial act in the Bologna archives refers to a purchase of a slave by Balthasar from a citizen of Pera as early as 1411.¹⁸³ A subsequent purchase of a slave is recorded for 1426 from a citizen of Caffa, the Genoese colony on the Black Sea, although the location of the transaction is not clearly indicated.¹⁸⁴ Another document attests to a stay in Constantinople in 1430, possibly into 1431.¹⁸⁵ Lupari's presence in Constantinople is also clearly substantiated by transactions recorded for the years 1438 and 1439 in the *Libro dei conti* of Giacomo Badoer.¹⁸⁶

The letter by which Eugenius appointed Lupari to this mission refers to him as citizen of Venice.¹⁸⁷ In an accompanying safe-conduct, Eugenius calls him a citizen of Bologna.¹⁸⁸ The archival records resolve this apparent contradiction of his citizenship: Balthasar Lupari's father Venturino was a silk merchant, from a family of silk entrepreneurs who had fled Lucca and settled in Bologna in the

¹⁸⁰ As noted above, KOLDITZ has traced the financial transactions in great detail, along with key biographical notices of the two financiers, see *Ibid.*, p. 246–256. A fuller biographical picture of Balthasar Lupari, drawing on archival records, is in HALFF, «Did Nicholas of Cusa Talk with Muslims?» of which the following is an abbreviated reflection, citing the primary sources used therein.

¹⁸¹ This is, in fact, one of the few references Cusanus makes throughout his entire work to his mission in Constantinople. Given all the eminent persons he would have met in the city, or on the sea journeys, it is striking that Balthasar Lupari is the only person from that time whom he mentions by name.

¹⁸² JASPER HOPKINS (ed.), *Nicholas of Cusa's De Pace Fidei and Cribratio Alkorani: Translation and Analysis*, The Arthur J. Banning Press, Minneapolis 1994, p. 76.

¹⁸³ Archivio di Stato di Bologna [hereinafter ASBo], Archivio Malvezzi-Lupari, Serie III, *Istrumenti e Scritture Lupari*, b. 48, no. 43, 18 September 1411.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, b. 49, 10 October 1426.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, b. 50, no. 1, 14 March 1431.

¹⁸⁶ BADOER, *Libro dei conti*, p. 587, 590, 715, 730, 738, 739 and 764.

¹⁸⁷ CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CXLI.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, doc. CXLII. Also in AC, I/2, no. 78.

early 14th century.¹⁸⁹ By 1420 at the latest, Balthasar, too, had entered the silk business,¹⁹⁰ for which Bologna had become a center of production.¹⁹¹ And in later years, in the 1440s, he served on a number of occasions as a member of city councils in Bologna.¹⁹² But there was also a strong and early connection to Venice. In 1430, Balthasar, along with his four brothers, was granted full Venetian citizenship, a status typically given after a lengthy and continuous residence and the payment of taxes.¹⁹³ Balthasar is identified in a notarial act of 1431 as a resident of the Venetian contrada of Sant'Agostino.¹⁹⁴ In February 1434, the Lupari brothers bought a house in the vicinity of the church of San Giovanni Crisostomo.¹⁹⁵ Other records from 1434¹⁹⁶ and 1436¹⁹⁷ show the brothers engaged in legal and commercial transactions in Venice.

Answers as to when and how Balthasar Lupari entered Eugenius' circle may lie in as yet unnoticed archival records. The origin of their relationship must have preceded the 1437 mission to Constantinople, as Eugenius, in both his commission and the safe-conduct for Lupari, referred to him as a *familiaris* – a

¹⁸⁹ The chronicler Ghirardacci attributes the rise of the silk production in Bologna to political refugees from Lucca, and refers specifically to a « Luparo Lupari » who came to live in Bologna, see CHERUBINO GHIRARDACCI, *Della Historia di Bologna, Parte Prima*, Bologna 1596, p. 574.

¹⁹⁰ Two references to Balthasar Lupari for 1420 in ASBo, Miscellanea delle Corporazioni d'Arte, A) *Arte della Seta*, no. 1, 9 January 1420, and *ibid.*, 3 December 1420.

¹⁹¹ LUCA MOLÀ, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore – London 2000, p. 15.

¹⁹² Balthasar Lupari was elected to the Council of 120, in 1440: POMPEO SCIPIONE DOLFI, *Cronologia delle famiglie nobili di Bologna*, presso Gio. Battista Ferroni, Bologna 1670, p. 482. Lupari was also a member of the *Anziani*, an elected city council of elders, in May and June 1445, January and February 1448, May and June 1452, March and April 1453, and March and April 1455, see ASBo, Comune Governo, *Consigli ed ufficiali*, Magistrature ed ambascerie, no. 67, c.76, Estrazioni di Anziani, Gonfalonieri del Popolo e Massari delle Arti.

¹⁹³ The Luparis were granted the fullest citizenship status in the Venetian system, that of *cittadini originarii*. ASV, Cassiere della bolla Ducale, *Grazie*, reg. 22, fol. 44r, and ASV, Senato, Privilegi, reg. 2, fol. 33r. These sources identified through the online *Cives Veneciarum* database of Venetian citizenship privileges established under the supervision of Reinhold Mueller, <<http://www.civesveneciarum.net/dettaglio.php?id=1249>>, versione 56/2017-02-01, accessed on 23 November 2018.

¹⁹⁴ ASBo, Archivio Malvezzi-Lupari, Serie III, *Istrumenti e Scritture Lupari*, b. 50, no. 1, 14 March 1431.

¹⁹⁵ ASV, Cancelleria inferiore, Notai, b. 149 (Vettore Pomino), 1433–1438, fol. 1r. The neighbourhood around S. Giovanni Crisostomo was known as a center of the Lucchese community in Venice. See LUCA MOLÀ, *La Comunità dei lucchesi a Venezia. Immigrazione e industria della seta nel tardo medioevo*, Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, Venezia 1994, p. 221–236.

¹⁹⁶ ASV, Cancelleria inferiore, Notai, b. 149 (Vettore Pomino), 1433–1438, fol. 7v, dated 27 July 1434, commission for Balthasar Lupari as agent for Giovanni Soranzo.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1433–1438, fol. 33v, dated 26 July 1436, related to a trade partnership involving Francesco Lupari and Antonio Serafino. Gaspare, Balthasar's older brother, even had his testament prepared in Venice, in early 1439. In it, he refers to himself as citizen and resident of Venice, of the confinio of San Giovanni Crisostomo. See ASV, Notarile, Testamenti, b. 824 (notaio Vettore Pomino), nr. 26, 27 February 1438 (*more veneto*).

member of his household, just like Michele Zono.¹⁹⁸ Eugenius may have known the Luparis from his time as papal governor of Bologna in 1423,¹⁹⁹ or during his two-year residence in Bologna starting in 1436, after his flight from Rome,²⁰⁰ or from their work and residence in Venice.²⁰¹ Alternatively, Lupari may have worked with Cristoforo Garatone or Michele Zono, and been commended to Eugenius by Garatone.²⁰² As with other persons involved in the 1437 mission, in particular Garatone and Zono, the close relationship to Eugenius continued in the years that followed. In 1445, the Pope made Lupari a *comes palatinus*,²⁰³ as he had also done for Zono. Balthasar's older brother Gasparo, too, was given this honorific title for unspecified services and loyalty to the Church.²⁰⁴

The Luparis appear to have been successful businessmen, and had invested their earnings in real estate in and around Bologna,²⁰⁵ even if there is no indication of extreme wealth,²⁰⁶ or of being bankers. Notwithstanding their non-patrician origin, Balthasar Lupari and others in the family did rise to some political prominence over time. Balthasar, for example, in addition to holding the city offices mentioned earlier, represented the city of Bologna in the conclusion of a strategic alliance between Florence, Venice and Bologna in July 1443.²⁰⁷ Moreover, in 1452, he was knighted by Emperor Frederick III during a brief stop of the latter in Bologna, presumably given Balthasar's affiliation with the

¹⁹⁸ CECCONI, *Studi storici*, docs. CXLI and CXLII. Unlike for Zono, a record of his nomination as *familiaris* of the Pope has not yet been found.

¹⁹⁹ On his time as governor of Bologna in 1423, see GILL, *Eugenius IV*, p. 33–34.

²⁰⁰ See HERMANN DIENER, BRIGIDE SCHWARZ, « Das Itinerar Papst Eugens IV. (1431–1447) », *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 82 (2002), p. 193–230, here p. 216–217 and p. 226. Also: GILL, *Eugenius IV*, p. 83. Eugenius was still residing in Bologna when he received Cusanus and the other minority representatives from the Council of Basel in May 1437 and dispatched his delegation to Constantinople, GILL, *Council of Florence*, p. 77–78.

²⁰¹ Perhaps there were trade partnerships between the Condulmer and Lupari families. There are records for example, of joint ventures between a Marco Condulmer – not the legate of the 1437 mission – and merchants of the Luchese community in Venice at the beginning of the 15th century: MOLÀ, *La Comunità dei lucchesi*, p. 238 and p. 258.

²⁰² Suggested by KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 256.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 256 and fn. 429, citing a register in the Vatican.

²⁰⁴ ASBo, Comune Governo, *Feudi e cittadinanza*, no. 428, 23 May 1445.

²⁰⁵ As evidenced by a 1449 agreement among the surviving (male) descendants of Venturino on the division of the latter's properties: ASBo, Archivio Malvezzi-Lupari, Serie III, *Istrumenti e Scritture Lupari*, b. 52, 16 August 1449.

²⁰⁶ The family house in Bologna can still be seen today, at Via dal Luzzo no. 4.

²⁰⁷ RICCARDO PREDELLI (ed.), *I libri commemoriali della Repubblica di Venezia. Regesti*, vol. IV, Visentini, Venice 1896, libro XIII, no. 239 and 240, p. 279–280.

Bentivoglio clan²⁰⁸ and as part of the Emperor's agenda of building long-term political support in the Italian city states.²⁰⁹

VI. *The Pope and the impact of the Council minority representatives*

If the Pope's core team of trusted Venetians covered the diplomatic, financial, logistical, linguistic and military aspects of the mission, what added value did the Council representatives of the minority faction represent for him? The Bishop of Digne, the Bishop of Porto²¹⁰ and Nicholas of Cusa were not selected by Eugenius: they were representatives chosen by the leaders of the minority faction in Basel to present, to the Pope, its decree on the location of a council with the Byzantines, and thereafter to proceed to Constantinople.²¹¹ After their arrival in Bologna, in May or early June of 1437, Eugenius accepted the minority decree in his bull *Salvatoris et Dei Nostri*.²¹² He thereupon added the three Council minority ambassadors to his own delegation to Constantinople. In doing so, Eugenius seems to have made a distinction between the two groups of ambassadors, placing his own first. This is clear, for example, from his letter to the Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund, of 7 June 1437, in which Eugenius says that the representatives of the Council and the Greek representatives would proceed, *with his own*, to Constantinople.²¹³ Cusanus, too, underlined the distinction some years later, in his oration at the Diet of Frankfurt, in June 1442. According to the written version of his speech, Cusanus explained that Eugenius « sent envoys to Constantinople, *along with those* who had presented [the minority] decree to His Holiness ». ²¹⁴ In other words, the narrative, as it was adopted at the time by those involved, was that the three ambassadors represented the Council of Basel and not the Pope, and that they were added to the delegation of Eugenius IV.

²⁰⁸ See HALFF, « Did Nicholas of Cusa Talk with Muslims? », p. 40–41.

²⁰⁹ For this observation, I thank Cynthia Pyle. While in Ferrara that year, Frederick III knighted a one-year old child of a prominent family there, Niccolò Postumo da Correggio, a parallel to the knighting of the seven-year old Giovanni son of Annibale Bentivoglio in Bologna at the same time as Lupari, see CYNTHIA M. PYLE, « Politian's *Orfeo* and Other *Favole Mitologiche* in the Context of Late Quattrocento Northern Italy », Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, New York 1976.

²¹⁰ For biographical references of the Bishops of Porto and of Digne, including activities at the Council of Basel, see: HELMRATH, *Das Basler Konzil*, p. 249 (Porto), p. 400 and 435 (Digne); DECALUWÉ et al., *Companion to the Council of Basel*, p. 133, 217, 326 and 389 (Digne); GILL, *Council of Florence*, discusses both Bishops, but not in relation to their careers before the 1437 events.

²¹¹ Instructions for the delegation in HALLER, *Concilium Basiliense*, vol. I, p. 459–463, excerpts in AC I/2, no. 295a.

²¹² CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CXXVI. This stage of the events is discussed in GILL, *Council of Florence*, p. 77–78, and KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 63–64.

²¹³ CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CXXXI. Also excerpts in AC, I/2, no. 299.

²¹⁴ IZBICKI, *Writings on Church and Reform*, p. 179, with emphasis added by me.

In all the contemporary reports that have been preserved, the three ambassadors continued to be perceived, presented and referred to as representatives of *the Council* throughout the discussions in Constantinople. In addition to the sources just mentioned, there are the instructions to the fleet commander Antonio Condulmer, in which Eugenius refers to the Bishop of Porto, the Bishop of Digne and Cusanus as the speakers of the Council of Basel, again distinguished from his own.²¹⁵ Similarly, in his letter to Emperor John VIII of 15 July 1437 announcing the arrival of his delegation, Eugenius introduces the three ambassadors by name as representatives of the Council of Basel, along with his own special envoys, Marco Condulmer, and Cristoforo Garatone.²¹⁶ This is also how the former referred to themselves in their own reports.²¹⁷ Furthermore, as the report by the Bishop of Digne presented in Ferrara in March 1438 shows, the papal and conciliar envoys spoke separately on their arrival in September 1437: Garatone for the Pope, and the two Bishops for the Council.²¹⁸

John of Ragusa, who had resided in Constantinople as Council representative since 1435, and who continued to side with the majority faction, felt that he had been deceived by the papal team when they arrived on the *Pasqualiga* in early September 1437. In his version of the events, Garatone and the Bishops of Digne and Porto withheld information from him about the split in the Council, and presented the minority decree of 7 May 1437 as if it had been the agreed outcome of an undivided Council.²¹⁹ Syropoulos, too, reports the events from this perspective, and suggests that this amounted to a ruse that was exposed as soon as the Council majority convoy arrived.²²⁰ It is hard to believe, however, that the Byzantines were not already informed of what had happened in Basel. After all, the Emperor's ambassadors to the Council of Basel for 1436–1437, Ioannes Dishypatos²²¹ and Manuel Tarchaneiotes Boullotes²²², had witnessed the ever-

²¹⁵ Letter to Antonio Condulmer of 6 July 1437, in CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CXL. Relevant excerpt also in AC, I/2, no. 312.

²¹⁶ Letter of Eugenius IV to John VII Paleologos, 15 July 1437, in CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CXLIX.

²¹⁷ E.g., the report of the Bishop of Digne, CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CLXXXVIII: « nos, ambassiatores sacri Concilii ».

²¹⁸ The Bishop of Digne, describing the ceremony in the Hagia Sophia, in the presence of the Emperor and the Patriarch, the day after their first audience with the Emperor, *Ibid.*, doc. CLXXXVIII.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, doc. CLXXXVIII, p. DVII–DVIII.

²²⁰ LAURENT, *Les 'Mémoires'*, p. 179.

²²¹ PLP, no. 5537.

²²² PLP, no. 3088. For a discussion of the roles of these men – among other members of the Byzantine aristocracy – in the lead-up to the Council, see KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 149–151 and 154–156.

sharpening divisions in the first months of 1437.²²³ Both had travelled back to Constantinople on the *Pasqualiga*,²²⁴ and would presumably have briefed the Emperor on arrival.

In any event, the majority party of the Council, once they did reach Constantinople, understood what was at stake. They had been pushed into a defensive position: they now had to explain why it was they, not the minority representatives who had arrived earlier, who spoke for the Council. In numerous instances in their reports, John of Ragusa and the Bishops of Viseu and Lausanne described the Bishops of Digne and of Porto and Cusanus as false representatives of the Council.²²⁵ Presenting their own credentials and denying those of the minority faction became the first agenda items for their meeting with the Emperor.²²⁶ And indeed, in the presence of the Emperor, the two Bishops asserted that only they represented the Council, and that the « false ambassadors », including Cusanus, were to be rejected.²²⁷ With the presence in Constantinople, however, of a delegation consisting of representatives of both Council and Pope, any possible claim that it was a Church Council, and not the Pope, which represented the universal Church and could bind it in reunification discussions, had been neutralized as an argument to persuade the Byzantines (such a conciliarist assertion would, in any event, not have been compatible with Greek ecclesiology, see further below). Eventually the Council representatives – perhaps realizing that they were losing ground in this debate, and changing tactics to gain time – proposed as a last-ditch effort that they would remain in Constantinople for six months to protect the city while the Emperor would send

²²³ Kolditz points out that they were not, however, in Basel at the time of the adoption of the two conflicting decrees by the majority and minority factions on 7 May 1434; see KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 63–64 and fn. 93.

²²⁴ This follows, among others, from an instruction given on 12 August 1437 to the Venetian ambassador to Emperor Sigismund which describes the departure, some days prior, of a galley of the intermediate type, carrying the Pope's envoys and those of the Byzantine Emperor, as well as money for the Cretan crossbowmen, see IORGA, *Notes et extraits*, II, p. 16. Syropoulos also notes their return to Constantinople with the papal convoy, although he does not specify on which galley, see LAURENT, *Les 'Mémoires'*, p. 173.

²²⁵ John of Ragusa's report in CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CLXXVIII. Similar expression in the report of Viseu and Lausanne, in *Ibid.*, doc. CLXXIX.

²²⁶ HALLER, *Concilium Basiliense*, vol. V, p. 260, containing the proposed agenda for the first meeting with the Emperor: 1) present letters of accreditation from the Council; 2) apologize for absence of a third ambassador, who had fallen sick before departure (John, Bishop of Lübeck); 3) present decree denying the legitimacy of the other ambassadors who claim to represent the Council: they are not to be believed.

²²⁷ AC, I/2, nr. 328, report of the Bishop of Viseu and the Bishop of Lausanne to the Council of Basel, 3 February 1438. Syropoulos reports that John of Ragusa gave the Patriarch and the Emperor more independent advice, pointing out that it was not in their interest to choose either side, see LAURENT, *Les 'Mémoires'*, p. 181.

an embassy to the Pope and the Council to obtain further clarity.²²⁸ This offer was turned down, and eventually they were granted no more audiences with either the Emperor or the Patriarch.

What, ultimately, led the Emperor to choose the papal convoy? Was the presence of Nicholas of Cusa and the two Bishops as Council minority representatives relevant in these considerations? Surprisingly, given the detail of his account and his intimate knowledge of the discussions, Syropoulos does not provide a conclusive reading on why, in the end, the Emperor chose to travel with the papal convoy. Syropoulos describes, with a dramatic eye for detail, the standoff between the two Latin delegations after their arrival in Constantinople;²²⁹ the arguments presented by the Council majority;²³⁰ the arguments made by the papal delegation, which, in turn, compelled the Council's delegation to prove to the Byzantines how much the money they actually carried, and to defend themselves why they had arrived late to Constantinople;²³¹ and the advice given by many Greek prelates to the Emperor that he should not, at present, go anywhere, and that he had good reasons to turn down both offers, since he had agreed to come to an ecumenical council, and this was currently not possible given the divisions between Pope and Council.²³² The Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund and the Council representative Jean of Ragusa, too, advised the Emperor that it was not in his interest to decide either way.²³³ Even the Ottoman Sultan in Adrianople – for quite different reasons no doubt – discouraged him from going to the West.²³⁴ But after this narrative build-up, Syropoulos announces, without any transition, that the offer of the Council majority was rejected, that their galleys were sent back, and that from that point on preparations were made to sail with the papal galleys.²³⁵ On what grounds the Emperor cut the knot, Syropoulos does not say.

Other contemporary or near-contemporary Byzantine sources offer little additional insight. The historian Laonikos Chalkokondyles (c. 1423–after 1463)²³⁶ highlights the division in the Latin church, presenting it as a conflict between the « Germans, who were in the area of the city of Basel » and Pope Eugenius, supported by the Romans, Venetians and other Italians. He notes that each side sent « triremes » to Constantinople, inviting John to a synod hosted by them to

²²⁸ Only in version B of the manuscript, LAURENT, *Les 'Mémoires'*, p. 611–613.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 177–179, and 609–611.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 179–181.

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 181. In version B, this advice is also attributed to the court official Adronikos Kantakuzenos (on whom *PLP*, no. 10957), see *Ibid.*, p. 611–613.

²³³ *Ibid.*, p. 181 and, for Ragusa, also in version B, p. 613.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

²³⁶ *PLP*, no. 30512.

discuss their differences with the Greek church. Chalkokondyles suggests that the choice was purely a matter of timing, and hints at the importance of location: the Emperor « politely dismissed » the ships sent by the Council, stating that he had already committed to the Romans and other Italians, who had « invited him to go there ». ²³⁷ The chronicler Doukas (?–after 1462) ²³⁸ does not mention the competing invitations and convoys, but emphasizes the financial aspects of the undertaking and the Pope's promise and proven ability to cover the costs of the journey and the stay of the large Byzantine delegation in Italy. ²³⁹ Neither George Sphrantzes (who, as senior aide to the Emperor's brother Constantine, and present in Constantinople at that very moment, would have been well placed to have insight into the decision-making process), nor the slightly later historian Theodore Spandounes mention any divisions among the Latins. ²⁴⁰

The question as to why the Emperor chose the papal convoy continues to generate debate in the literature. ²⁴¹ The discussion has focused on a number of practical considerations, such as the lateness of the arrival of the Basel convoy, the proposed venue of the council of union and the route there, ²⁴² the superior Greek language skills of the papal delegation (through Garatone), the failure of the Basel majority to bring Cretan crossbowmen as agreed, as well as the more credible assurances that the Pope was able to give about the expenses of the

²³⁷ LAONIKOS CHALKOKONDYLES, *The Histories*, trans. by ANTHONY KALDELLIS, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2014, 2 vols. (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 33 and 34), here vol. II, p. 9–11.

²³⁸ PLP, no. 5685.

²³⁹ DOUKAS, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks. An Annotated Translation of 'Historia Turco-Byzantina'*, trans. HARRY J. MAGOULIAS, Wayne State University Press, Detroit 1975, p. 179: « When the papal triremes had arrived from Italy with the necessary monies to defray their expenses, they boarded and sailed from Constantinople to Venice ».

²⁴⁰ SPHRANTZES, *Chronicle*, p. 49: « We reached the City on September 24. On November 27 of the same year, our emperor Lord John, accompanied by [etc.], departed for the scheduled synod »; SPANDOUNES, *Origin of Ottoman Emperors*, p. 28, cited above, see fn. 8.

²⁴¹ See, among other recent contributions, IVAN MARIANO, « The Council and Negotiations with the Greeks », in DECALUWÉ et al., *Companion to the Council of Basel*, p. 318–321; VERA ANDRIOPOULOU, « The Logistics of a Union: Diplomatic Communication through the Eyes of Sylvester Syropoulos », in KONDYLI et al., *Sylvester Syropoulos*, p. 49–67, in particular p. 64–67; ENRICO MORINI, « L'Union vue par les 'antiunionistes': l'orthodoxie ecclésiologique e l'incoerenza de l'orthodoxie de Lyon à Florence », in MARIE-HÉLÈNE BLANCHET, FRÉDÉRIC GABRIEL, *Réduire le schisme? Ecclésiologies et politiques de l'union entre orient et occident (XIIIe–XVIIIe siècle)*, Centre de recherche d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, Paris 2013 (Monographies, 39), p. 13–40, in particular p. 30–31. Older but still relevant are: PETAR VRANKIĆ, « Johannes von Ragusa im Ringen um die Teilnahme der Griechen am Basler Konzil », *Annuario historiae conciliorum*, 27/28 (1995/96), p. 463–486, in particular p. 484–486; TUILIER, « La mission a Byzance de Jean de Raguse », p. 137–152. Briefly in GILL, *Council of Florence*, p. 81.

²⁴² Nicholas of Cusa too, in his oration at Diet of Frankfurt in 1442, attributes the failure of the Basel delegation to the fact that they insisted on travelling by sea to the port of Aigues Mortes in the Provence, and from there to Basel, a route the Greeks could not be persuaded to take, see IZBICKI, *Writings on Church and Reform*, p. 179.

Byzantine delegation. In addition, scholars have highlighted ecclesiological aspects, emphasizing the long-established Byzantine position that unification could only be considered through an ecumenical council. In this analysis, a central consideration for the Greeks would have been whether the papal conception of an ecumenical council, or the conciliar one, came closest to their own ecclesiological ideals.²⁴³

While a firm answer as to what, ultimately, persuaded the Emperor may be difficult to articulate, the sources do allow us to understand how the Byzantine court responded to the presence of two sets of delegates claiming to represent the Council of Basel. Judging from the accounts of the Council majority, the Byzantines appear to have been frustrated by the dilemma this posed, and to have been greatly unsettled by the infighting among the Latins. Even notices reaching Venice via mercantile channels spoke of the Greek concerns.²⁴⁴ The finer points of how canonically sound conciliar decisions ought to be made, and the fact that the Bishops of Viseu and Lausanne represented the *maior pars* of the Council members, may have been irrelevant at the Byzantine court.²⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the reports from the Basel representatives provide evidence that, in encounter after encounter with the Byzantine officials, the issue as to who truly spoke for the Council, and how there could be two delegations claiming to do so, arose as major sticking point: in virtually every meeting with the Council majority faction, the Byzantines brought up the discord,²⁴⁶ and the Emperor and

²⁴³ On Western and Greek notions of « ecumenical council », see KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 167–187; MORINI, « L'Union vue par les 'antiunionistes' », in particular p. 24–31; BLANCHET, *Georgios Gennadios Scholarios*, p. 267–280; GILL, *Council of Florence*, p. 14–15 and 19. Kolditz cautions against reducing the entire question to a purely ecclesiological one, or indeed assuming that the Byzantine position was a monolithic one, see KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 68–69.

²⁴⁴ A reference to the Byzantine unease with the discord in SANUDO, *Le vite dei Dogi*, p. 146.

²⁴⁵ Syropoulos frames the issue as a division between Council and Pope, and refers to « representatives of the Council » (e.g., LAURENT, *Les 'Mémoires'*, p. 183) in contrast to « the representatives of the Pope » (e.g., *Ibid.*, p.191), by which he also seems to mean the Bishops of Digne and Porto, and sometimes even uses the term « the Bishops of the Pope » (*Ibid.*, p. 179). He does not distinguish between a minority and a majority faction of the Council. John of Ragusa's more succinct reporting suggests that the notions of *maior pars* and *sanior pars* did come up in the discussions, see CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CLXXVIII, p. dxv.

²⁴⁶ As indicated in the detailed report of the Bishops of Viseu and Lausanne, 3 February 1438, in particular. See HALLER, *Concilium Basiliense*, vol. V, p. 312–335. The discord between Pope and the Council of Basel was raised by the Greeks in discussions with the majority representatives on: 7 October 1437, in a meeting with the Patriarch, p. 317; on 8 October, in a meeting with the Emperor, p. 320; on 9 October, in a meeting with advisers of the Emperor, p. 323; on 11 October, in a meeting with the Emperor, p. 324; on 12 October, in a meeting with the Patriarch, p. 325–326; on 15 October, in a meeting with advisers of the Emperor, p. 327–328; and on 17 October, in a meeting with the Emperor, p. 332. No more audiences were granted to the majority representatives after that, except for a final meeting on 30 October. Also briefly noted as an

the Patriarch made it clear that they were not interested in arbitrating between the factions.²⁴⁷

Both the reactions of the Basel majority representatives and those at the Byzantine court, then, show that the arrival of three delegates alongside those of the Pope, claiming to represent the Council of Basel, affected the dynamics in Constantinople in dramatic ways – more so, presumably, than if this had been simply a continuation of Garatone's skilled negotiations on Eugenius's behalf. It was not just that the parallel tracks of diplomacy that had been conducted with the Byzantines on and off since 1433 – one by the Council of Basel, the other by the Pope – had arrived at a final showdown in Constantinople in late 1437: Eugenius had, in effect, commingled the two streams. He did so by continually emphasizing that the three minority envoys were those of the Council, now fully aligned with his approach to a council of union with the Greek Church, while still neatly distinguishing them from his own delegates. It is possible that Eugenius had been mindful of Byzantine interests in doing so: the Greek position that the schism between the Churches could be healed through an ecumenical council only was well known in the West,²⁴⁸ and Eugenius would have felt the need to demonstrate that his convoy, and his proposal for the venue of a unification council, had conciliar support. And yet this need not have been a primarily ecclesiological consideration – for either Eugenius or the Byzantines – but rather, or also, a political one: regardless of how the concept of an ecumenical council was defined, John VIII needed certainty that a sustainable agreement was in reach – an agreement with partners who could bind the Latin Church – and for this both the Pope and the Council of Basel were essential.

VII. Conclusions

The stakes for Eugenius IV in 1437 were very high. Persuading the Byzantines to board the papal galleys, rather than those sent by the Council majority, would be a first step towards a unification of the Churches on his terms, and towards a significant expansion of his authority as Pope over Christians in the East. It would also open the door to a new unified military campaign under papal command in support of Byzantium and against the advancing Ottomans, as eventually launched in 1444. Failure of the 1437 legation would represent – not just to Eugenius, but to all European powers affected by the schism in the Church – a

issue raised by Byzantine interlocutors in John of Ragusa's report, see CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CLXXVIII, p. dxv.

²⁴⁷ So also KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 66–68.

²⁴⁸ See, among others, GILL, *Council of Florence*, p. 14–15 and 19, even if what that notion entailed for the Greeks was not always as clearly understood in the West, see KOLDITZ, *Johannes VIII*, p. 167–187.

major victory for the conciliar forces seeking to assert control over papal authority.

Eugenius would have wanted people whom he could trust for this mission. There was already something about Gabriele Condulmer's reliance on a close inner circle that stood out to his contemporaries. Andreas Sylvius Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II, wrote about Eugenius that « on those who enjoyed his confidence he relied somewhat more, and conferred greater power, than was fitting ».²⁴⁹

Indeed, the biographical findings of this paper cast light on important connections and striking parallels among the members of the papal team, and links to Eugenius himself. This was not a randomly chosen group of men, assembled *ad hoc* for a job in the East. For all but one of the key agents, the record reveals active connections to, if not service on behalf of, Eugenius that predated 1437 (Marco and Antonio Condulmer; Christoforo Garatone; Alvise Bembo; Michiel Zono; Balthasar Lupari; probably Nicolò Contarini). The single exception (Ettore Pasqualigo) can be linked to others on the mission (by marriage, to a relative of Zono). Almost all members had previous experience in Constantinople or elsewhere in Greece. Aside from the four galley commanders, who could not be anything other than Venetian noblemen, Eugenius's agents were, like himself, non-patricians. Moreover, direct connections among them (particularly Garatone, Zono, Lupari and Pasqualigo) and continued service on behalf of the Pope extended past 1437, in many cases involving continued active roles in Eugenius's eastern policies (Marco and Antonio Condulmer; Garatone; Zono; Bembo; probably Contarini).

With their proven record, including in Constantinople, and with their ties to either Eugenius himself or to Venice, or to both, Marco Condulmer, Cristoforo Garatone, Antonio Condulmer, Alvise Bembo, Michele Zono, Balthasar Lupari, and the other galley commanders were such people in which the Pope could place his full confidence. Eugenius chose most of them himself for the key responsibilities: the nominal leadership, the lead in the actual negotiations, the command of the fleet, and the financing of the undertaking. Together, this thoroughly Venetian group of people represented the brains, the brawn and the « dough » of his mission. None of the Council minority representatives became significantly involved in any of these core functions.

But in addition to loyal, resourceful and well-connected agents, Eugenius needed something else: legitimacy in the eyes of the Byzantines – or what he thought would amount to such legitimacy. Given the deeply divided state of the Roman Church, of which the Byzantines were aware, the Pope needed to show

²⁴⁹ The comment is to be found in: AENEAS SILVIUS PICCOLOMINI, *Europe (c. 1400–1458)*, trans. ROBERT BROWN, intr. and annot. NANCY BISAHA, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, DC, 2013, p. 261.

that he had conciliar weight behind his invitation. After all, the stakes were high for the Byzantines, too: irrespective of matters of ecclesiology, it was risky to make sensitive and unpopular concessions on matters of doctrine and authority in exchange for Western military support, if such an agreement would not bind the Roman Church as a whole.

It is this need for diplomatic and conciliar credibility on the part of Eugenius IV that the three representatives of the Council minority, including Cusanus, could satisfy. Cusanus' value in this company was real, and gave vital conciliar legitimacy to the Pope's delegation, as well as a strategic edge over the Basel representatives. This did not require Cusanus to play an active role in the negotiations, even if his occasional interventions – and we know of one confirmed comment he made involving conciliar history – would have been helpful. As outsiders to Eugenius' trusted, established circle of Venetians, Cusanus and the Bishops of Digne and Porto were probably not expected to handle any of the core functions, and certainly not to take over Garatone's lead in diplomatic matters.

And so one can return to the autobiographical comment with which this paper started, and offer the following new reading: Cusanus – and the Bishops of Digne and Porto – undoubtedly made a difference in the Eugenius IV's efforts to persuade the Byzantines to come to Italy. But that was less because of what he, or they, did or said while in Constantinople. It was all the more so because of what they represented as members of the Council of Basel, and the political weight that this added to the Pope's offer to the Byzantine court. Eugenius IV's decision in May 1437 to add Cusanus and the other two delegates to his mission had a profound impact in Constantinople, possibly exactly how the Pope had intended it: in the eyes of the Byzantines, the Council of Basel – or what remained of it – no longer looked like the reliable, unified partner they needed for an ecumenical assembly.

Annex 1

Chronology of movements of persons involved in the mission to Constantinople:
May – December 1437²⁵⁰

7 May	In Basel, the Council splits over the location of a council with the Greek church; two opposing decrees are adopted ²⁵¹
20 May	The Bishop of Digne and Cusanus leave Basel for Bologna to bring news of the minority decree to Eugenius IV ²⁵²
30 May	In Bologna, Eugenius IV endorses the minority decree ²⁵³
June/July	In Venice, the Senate discusses arrangements for the galleys to be made available to the Pope; ²⁵⁴ other preparations are also made, including appointing crew members
6 July	Eugenius IV gives Antonio Condulmer broad powers for his mission as captain general of the papal convoy to Constantinople ²⁵⁵
7 July	Eugenius tasks Michele Zono and Balthasar Lupari with handling the finances of the mission; ²⁵⁶ Eugenius issues a safe-conduct for Lupari (and up to eight of his staff). ²⁵⁷
9 July	The Bishops of Digne and Porto, and presumably Garatone, leave Bologna for Venice ²⁵⁸
15 July	Eugenius appoints Marco Condulmer, archbishop of Tarentaise, and Garatone as nuncios, ²⁵⁹ and confers powers of legate <i>de latere</i> on Condulmer ²⁶⁰

²⁵⁰ This is meant as an aid to the text, not a full discussion of occasional problems of chronology. Not all sources are given when there is more than one. Not covered is the journey from Constantinople back to Venice of the main convoy in late 1437, for which see LAURENT, *Les 'Mémoires'*, p. 196–217 and discussion in TOM MÜLLER, « Die Konstantinopelreise der Basler Konzilsminderheit und der Gesandten Papst Eugens IV. (1437/38) », *Cusanus Jahrbuch*, 7 (2015), p. 3–20.

²⁵¹ CECCONI, *Studi storici*, docs. CXX and CXXI.

²⁵² AC, I/2, no. 204, 205.

²⁵³ CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CXXVI,

²⁵⁴ ASV, Senato, Misti, reg. 60, fol. 22v and fol. 23v–24r (4 July), and fol. 30v (6 August). See also SANUDO, *Le vite dei Dogi*, p. 617, for 7 July 1437.

²⁵⁵ CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CXL.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, doc. CXLI.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, doc. CXLL.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, doc. CLXXXVIII.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, doc. CXLVII.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, doc. CXLVIII.

26 July	In Venice, Garatone, and the Bishops of Digne and Porto, embark on the intermediate galley (<i>galea bastarda</i>) commanded by Ettore Pasqualigo ²⁶¹
c. 1–10 Aug	In Venice, Marco Condulmer and Nicholas of Cusa embark on the three great galleys (<i>galee grosse</i>) commanded by Antonio Condulmer ²⁶²
15 August	The <i>galea Pasqualiga</i> arrives in Crete. They stay for 4 days, arranging and paying for the hire of 300 crossbowmen, to be transported by the three galleys which will arrive after them ²⁶³
3 September	Pasqualigo's galley, with Garatone and the Bishops of Digne and Porto, arrives at Constantinople ²⁶⁴
7 September	The three galleys carrying Marco Condulmer, as well as Cusanus, stop at Karystos, Euboea. Constantine Dragases, brother of John VIII Paleologos (and later Constantine XI Paleologos, last emperor of Byzantium), accompanied by George Sphrantzes, boards ²⁶⁵
15 September	In Constantinople, Emperor John VIII receives Garatone and the Bishops of Digne and Porto
23 September	Marco Condulmer, along with Nicholas Cusanus, arrives in Constantinople on the three great galleys ²⁶⁶
3 October	The convoy of the Council of Basel (majority faction) arrives in Constantinople. Numerous meetings take place in October between its ambassadors and the Byzantines ²⁶⁷
2 November	The convoy of the Basel majority leaves Constantinople, empty-handed ²⁶⁸

²⁶¹ Ibid., doc. CLXXXVIII.

²⁶² The exact date has not been established. It would have been shortly after the departure of the *Pasqualiga*, according to Juan of Segovia, AC, vol. I/2, nr. 319, and is unlikely to have been before 30 July, the date of a Senate instruction not to engage in competition with the normal commercial fleet, ASV, Senato, Misti, reg. 60, fol. 28v. Stefano Magno states that the convoy left in August, and that Pasqualigo had left 15 days before them. Since Pasqualigo left on 26 July, this gives an approximate departure of the three galleys including Cusanus on 10 August. That in turn would mean a travel time of 45 days, including stops in Crete and Euboea, compared to 39 days for Pasqualigo (including four days in Crete).

²⁶³ CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CXXXVIII.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., doc CXXXVIII and CLXXXVIII.

²⁶⁵ IORGA, *Notes et extraits*, vol. III, p. 20. In his chronicle, Sphrantzes states that he and Constantine Dragases departed Patras for Karystos by land on 5 September, see SPHRANTZES, *Chronicle*, p. 49.

²⁶⁶ IORGA, *Notes et extraits*, vol. III, p. 22 fn.5. Slightly different dates: 22 September according to Magno: ÖNB, Cod. Vind. 6124, fol. 75r; 24 September, according to SPHRANTZES, *Chronicle*, p. 49.

²⁶⁷ HALLER, *Concilium Basiliense*, vol. V, p. 310 (arrival), p. 312–336 (negotiations).

²⁶⁸ Ibid., vol. V, p. 342

- 18 November John VIII informs Eugenius IV, in a letter entrusted to Michele Zono, that he has decided to come to Italy with the papal galleys²⁶⁹
- 19 November Ettore Pasqualigo, captain of the *galea bastarda*, carrying Michele Zono and members of the Byzantine emperor's household, departs Constantinople for Venice²⁷⁰
- 24 November In Constantinople, the Byzantines and the papal legation gradually board the papal galleys; on 27 November, they depart.²⁷¹ Arrival in Venice early February 1438.
- 23 December Ettore Pasqualigo arrives in Venice. Michele Zono proceeds immediately to Eugenius in Bologna.²⁷²
- 30 December Eugenius announces the imminent arrival of the Byzantine delegates on papal galleys, and reconfirms that the Council has been relocated from Basel to Ferrara²⁷³

²⁶⁹ HOFMANN, « Rodrigo, Dekan von Braga », p. 178.

²⁷⁰ IORGA, *Notes et extraits*, vol. III, p. 24–25, excerpts from report of the Collegio of Venice to the Cardinal of Sant'Angelo, 21 December 1437. ASV, Collegio, Lettere secrete, reg. 1436–1437, fol. 231v–232r.

²⁷¹ LAURENT, *Les 'Mémoires'*, p. 197–199; CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CLXXXVIII.

²⁷² ÖNB, Cod. Vind. 6214, fol. 76r.

²⁷³ CECCONI, *Studi storici*, doc. CLXX.

Annex 2

Overview of persons affiliated with the papal legation mentioned in the text

Papal nuncios

1. Marco Condulmer, son of Bartholomeo(?). Archbishop of Tarentaise. Nuncio and legate.
2. Cristoforo Garatone, son of Pietro, from Treviso. Bishop of Corone. Nuncio.

Council of Basel minority faction representatives

3. Pierre de Versailles, Bishop of Digne.
4. Antonio Martins de Chaves, Bishop of Porto.
5. Nicholas of Cusa, provost of Münstermaifeld.

Financiers

6. Michele Zono, son of Nicolò. Merchant. Citizen of Venice.
7. Balthasar Lupari, son of Venturino. Merchant. Citizen of Bologna and Venice.

Galley commanders

8. Antonio Condulmer, son of Bernardo. *Capitano*, commander of the convoy, and of the flagship.
9. Ettore Pasqualigo, son of Giovanni. *Sopracomito* of an intermediate galley.
10. Alvis Bembo, son of Bianco. *Sopracomito* of a galley.
11. Nicolò Contarini, son of Gasparino (?). *Sopracomito* of a galley.

Other naval officers

12. Michael of Rhodes, *comito* on the galley of Alvis Bembo.
13. Nicolò da Candia, *paron* on the galley of Alvis Bembo
14. Piero Vendilin, *homo de conseio* on the galley of Alvis Bembo
15. Donà Oxelo, scribe on the galley of Alvis Bembo.
16. Nicolò di Giudecca, *comito* and/or *homo de conseio* (?) on the galley of Ettore Pasqualigo.

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Cancelleria inferiore, Notai, b. 149
Cassiere della bolla Ducale, Grazie, reg. 22
Collegio, Notatorio, reg. 6 and 8
Duca di Candia, b.1
Notarile, Testamenti, b. 824 and b. 923
Senato, Mar, reg. 1
Senato, Misti, reg. 60
Senato, Privilegi, reg. 2
Senato, Secreti, reg. 14
Santo Spirito, Pergamene

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RELIGIONE E IDEOLOGIA NEL GIOVANE AGRIPPA: APPUNTI SULLA VOCAZIONE INTELLETTUALE

RELIGION AND IDEOLOGY IN THE YOUNG AGRIPPA:
NOTES ON THE INTELLECTUAL VOCATION

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Abstract

La riforma della cultura promossa da Cornelio Agrippa richiede una riorganizzazione della teologia tradizionale. Recuperando la *prisca theologia*, Agrippa mira ad emancipare l'esegesi delle Scritture dalla filosofia scolastica, responsabile di aver corrotto il significato autentico della Parola di Dio tramite un impiego indisciplinato della ragione a scapito della fede. Ripensare l'approccio alla Bibbia significa allora ridefinire il concetto di teologia: in quanto meditazione sulla parola divina, essa dovrà abbandonare le dispute dialettiche per tradursi in uno stile di vita contrassegnato dalla virtù e dall'integrità della fede in Cristo. Il programma di Agrippa, dunque, intende dimostrare l'incompetenza dei teologi scolastici e allo stesso tempo rivendica per il pensatore laico la libertà di interpretare le fonti della vera sapienza.

Parole chiave

Teologia, magia, ermetismo, esegesi, ragione.

Abstract

The reform of culture promoted by Cornelius Agrippa requires a rearrangement of the traditional theological thinking. By recovering the *prisca theologia*, Cornelius Agrippa intends to free the exegesis of the Scriptures from Scholastic philosophy, guilty of corrupting the meaning of the Word of God through an unruly use of the human reason at the expense of faith. Rethinking the approach to the Bible also means redefining the concept of theology: since it constitutes an investigation into the divine word, theology must abandon dialectical disputes in order to become a way of life characterized by virtue and integrity of faith in Christ. Agrippa's goal is to show on one hand the ineptitude of the Scholastic theologians on the other to claim for the lay thinker the freedom to interpret the sources of true wisdom.

Key Words

Theology, Magic, Hermeticism, Exegesis, Reason.



I

La riflessione teorica che Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim sviluppa negli anni di soggiorno in Italia costituisce un passaggio cruciale per determinare la missione intellettuale che un teologo è chiamato a incarnare. La teologia, interesse duraturo nella maturazione filosofica di Agrippa, assume in questa fase, tra il 1511 e il 1518, un profilo ideologico e una chiarezza programmatica a cui l'autore resterà sostanzialmente fedele nel corso di tutta la sua vicenda intellettuale.¹ Infatti il programma di riforma magico-religiosa della cultura, che

¹ Gli studi critici sulla figura e sull'opera di Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486–1535) costituiscono il prodotto maturo della storiografia filosofica novecentesca, inaugurata dalle ricerche di studiosi del calibro di Eugenio Garin, Daniel Pickering Walker, Frances Amelia Yates e François Secret tra gli anni '50 e '60 del secolo scorso. Tali ricerche hanno promosso un ripensamento generale delle categorie storiografiche adoperate nella storia della scienza e nella storia delle idee, sviluppando una linea di indagine che riconosce nella Magia, nell'Ermetismo e nella Qabbalah, spazi di riflessione filosofico-religiosa caratteristici del Rinascimento europeo. Sotto questo profilo gli scritti di Agrippa, che di questi temi presentano un approfondimento dettagliato – in dialogo costante con precursori come Marsilio Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Ludovico Lazzarelli, Johannes Reuchlin, Paolo Ricci, Francesco Zorzi – hanno assunto nel corso del Novecento un valore centrale per chiarire aspetti controversi della filosofia del Rinascimento. Pur nella diversità degli esiti interpretativi, che non è possibile delineare in una nota, questo approccio metodologico è stato sviluppato ininterrottamente nei contributi di riferimento che qui vengono richiamati brevemente. Le ricerche di Charles Garfield Nauert e i numerosi studi di Paola Zambelli hanno evidenziato a più riprese i fattori innovativi del pensiero di Agrippa, rintracciando nelle sue opere la volontà di affrontare un'epoca di crisi della cultura e di decadenza della spiritualità, attraverso una riforma dei saperi che abbia la magia per fondamento; ossia di caldeggiare una religiosità di carattere neoplatonico ed ermetico, fondata sul recupero del patrimonio sapienziale della magia antica, nell'ottica di contrastare i conflitti religiosi innescati da un lato dalla corruzione della teologia contemporanea, dall'altro dalla Riforma di Lutero. cf. CHARLES G. NAUERT, « Magic and Skepticism in Agrippa's thought », *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 18/2 (1957), p. 161–182; ID., « Agrippa in Renaissance Italy: the Esoteric Tradition », *Studies in the Renaissance*, 6 (1959), p. 195–222; ID., *Agrippa and the Crisis of Renaissance Thought*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana 1965 (Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences, 55); PAOLA ZAMBELLI, « A proposito del *De vanitate scientiarum et artium* di Cornelio Agrippa », *Rivista Critica di Storia della Filosofia*, 15/2 (1960), p. 166–180; EAD., « Cornelio Agrippa nelle fonti e negli studi recenti », *Rinascimento*, 8 (1968), p. 169–199; EAD., « Cornelio Agrippa, Erasmo e la teologia umanistica », *Rinascimento*, 10 (1970), p. 29–88; EAD., « Magic and Radical Reformation in Agrippa of Nettesheim », *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 39 (1976), p. 69–103. Successivamente i notevoli studi condotti da Vittoria Perrone Compagni, a cui si aggiungono le pregiate edizioni di testi agrippiani, che sviluppano un'iniziativa editoriale avviata da Paola Zambelli, hanno approfondito gli esiti della riforma magico-religiosa della cultura che Agrippa propugna, analizzando le matrici autenticamente filosofiche del suo programma. Le ricerche di Perrone Compagni – che hanno trovato in seguito nei saggi di Marc van der Poel e di Christopher I. Lehrich interessanti ripercussioni – hanno dimostrato in primo luogo quanto fosse parziale e inadeguato il paradigma interpretativo che classificava il pensiero di Agrippa nell'ambito di una scelta tra 'scetticismo' e 'occultismo', secondo una tendenza storiografica ampiamente attestata nella critica novecentesca (G. Rossi, E. Cassirer, R. Stadelmann,

Agrippa intraprende già nel corso della prima stesura del *De occulta philosophia* (1510), prevede non solo l'approfondimento di una meditazione sull'uomo ispirata alla letteratura ermetica e neoplatonica, bensì soprattutto il riassetto delle coordinate teologiche tradizionali. La critica ha ampiamente sottolineato, per quanto riguarda questa fase del pensiero di Agrippa, l'influenza considerevole del programma ficiniano di sottoporre a indagine la cosiddetta *prisca theologia*, muovendo dallo studio e dalla trasmissione delle fonti più antiche.² Recuperare le verità divine tramandate nelle opere dei *vetustissimi scriptores* riveste, a ben vedere, un significato del tutto peculiare nel progetto intellettuale di Agrippa, traducendosi nella volontà di rintracciare nella sua purezza la *prisca sapientia*, ossia quel sapere incorruttibile che, dignificato dalla sua origine sovrumana e dal

L. Thorndike, H. Haydn, C. G. Nauert, G. H. Daniels); in secondo luogo quanto fosse essenziale ridefinire le categorie storiografiche stesse, al fine di focalizzare, nell'apparente contraddittorietà dei pronunciamenti, l'unità del percorso di Agrippa, l'omogeneità del suo messaggio filosofico, rintracciabile, ad esempio, nel concetto di 'rigenerazione ermetica', come ha sostenuto anche Michael H. Keefer; cf. PAOLA ZAMBELLI, « Cornelio Agrippa. Testi scelti », in EUGENIO GARIN, MIRELLA BRINI, CESARE VASOLI, PAOLA ZAMBELLI (eds.), *Testi umanistici su l'ermetismo. Testi di Ludovico Lazzarelli, F. Giorgio Veneto, Cornelio Agrippa di Nettesheim*, Fratelli Bocca, Roma 1955 [Archivio di filosofia: organo della Società filosofica italiana, 1/1 (1955)], p. 105-162; EAD., « Agrippa di Nettesheim. *Dialogus de homine*, prima ed. », *Rivista critica di storia della filosofia*, 13, 1, 1958, p. 47-71; EAD., « Cornelio Agrippa. Scritti inediti e dispersi », *Rinascimento*, 5 (1965), p. 195-323; VITTORIA PERRONE COMPAGNI, « Una fonte di Cornelio Agrippa: il *De harmonia mundi* di Francesco Zorzi », *Annali dell'Istituto di filosofia*, 4 (1982), p. 45-74; EAD., « Il *De occulta philosophia* di Cornelio Agrippa », in GUIDO CANZIANI, GIANNI PAGANINI (eds.), *Le edizioni dei testi filosofici e scientifici del '500 e del '600. Problemi di metodo e prospettive di ricerca. Gargnano sul Garda, 13 aprile 1985*, Franco Angeli, Milano 1986 (Filosofia e scienza nel Cinquecento e nel Seicento. Serie 1, Studi, 29), p. 99-111; EAD., « Introduction », in CORNELIUS AGRIPPA AB NETTESHEIM, *De occulta philosophia libri tres*, Leiden - New York - Köln, Brill 1992 (Studies in the History of Christian Thought, 48), p. 1-50; EAD., « Riforma della magia e riforma della cultura in Agrippa », *I Castelli di Yale*, 2/2 (1997), p. 115-140; EAD., « *Dispersa intentio*: Alchemy, Magic and Scepticism in Agrippa », *Early Science and Medicine*, 5/2 (2000), p. 160-177; EAD., « Astrologia e filosofia occulta in Agrippa », *Rinascimento*, 41 (2001), p. 93-111; EAD., « Abracadabra: le parole della magia (Ficino, Pico, Agrippa) », *Rivista di estetica*, 42 (2002), p. 105-130; EAD., *Ermetismo e Cristianesimo in Agrippa. Il 'De triplici ratione cognoscendi Deum'*, Polistampa, Firenze 2005 (Hermetica Mediaevalia, 3); EAD., « Il *De occulta philosophia* di Cornelio Agrippa. Parole chiave: uomomicrocosmo, prisca theologia, cabala, magia », *Bruniana & Campanelliana*, 13/2 (2007), p. 429-448; EAD., « *Tutius ignorare quam scire. Cornelius Agrippa and Scepticism* », in GIANNI PAGANINI, JOSÉ R. MAIA NETO (eds.), *Renaissance Scepticisms*, Springer, Dordrecht 2009 (Archives internationales d'histoire des idées, 199), p. 91-110; MARC VAN DER POEL, « Agrippa von Nettesheim and Rhetoric: An Examination of the *Declamatio de originali peccato* », *Humanistica Lovaniensia*, 39 (1990), p. 177-206; ID., *Cornelius Agrippa. The Humanist Theologian and His Declamation*, Brill, Leiden 1997 (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 77); CHRISTOPHER. I. LEHRICH, *The Language of Demons and Angels. Cornelius Agrippa's Occult Philosophy*, Leiden, Brill 2003 (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 119); MICHAEL. H. KEEFER, « Agrippa's Dilemma: Hermetic 'Rebirth' and the Ambivalences of *De vanitate* and *De occulta philosophia* », *Renaissance Quarterly*, 41 (1988), p. 614-653.

² Cf. in particolare NAUERT, *Agrippa and the Crisis*, p. 43-46; PERRONE COMPAGNI, *Ermetismo e Cristianesimo*, p. 12-36; EAD., « Il *De occulta philosophia* », p. 435-439.

suo valore etico-religioso, è stato tramandato nel corso dei secoli dalle voci più autorevoli della teologia. Questo bagaglio di conoscenza è capace, qualora restaurato nella dignità della sua dottrina, di legittimare una riforma della cultura contemporanea.³ L'approccio di Agrippa assume, dunque, la forma di un'esplorazione sapienziale, concepita per attingere alle fonti pagane, cronologicamente più remote e ideologicamente consone all'insegnamento cristiano, una dottrina primigenia, espressione di una medesima verità, sempiterna e soprattutto salvifica, necessaria per ricomporre e rinnovare la teologia cristiana riscattandone il messaggio originario.⁴

³ Sul significato marcatamente religioso della filosofia, che fonda in Agrippa il ricorso al modello sapienziale della *pia philosophia*, cf. PERRONE COMPAGNI, « Il *De occulta philosophia* », p. 435-436: « La radice 'teologica' del sapere umano è per Agrippa nient'altro che il riconoscimento del rapporto che la filosofia deve intrattenere con Dio. [...] Il modello di questo atteggiamento del filosofare, che unisce *sapientia* e *pietas*, è la tradizione di antichi teologi che seppero leggere il libro della natura, scritto anch'esso *digito Dei*, con gli occhi fissi, più che al contenuto, all'autore e riconobbero nella realtà fisica il cosmico processo d'amore che ha il suo centro nel Bene eterno. Anche la ragione pagana era perfettamente alfabetizzata per interpretare l'insieme dei segni comunicativi con cui Dio si faceva conoscere nelle cose del mondo. La grandezza dei *prisci theologi* consiste nell'aver condotto la lettura non affidandosi ai sensi, ma all'attività contemplativa della *mens*, giungendo così a intuire quelle verità a cui la ragione cristiana, arricchita e sostenuta dalla Rivelazione, ha ora pieno accesso; ma anche nell'aver saputo accompagnare il loro atto conoscitivo al culto devoto del Principio».

⁴ In un saggio recente Thomas Leinkauf ha analizzato i modelli di approccio allo studio, al recupero e alla trasmissione delle dottrine dei filosofi antichi, specialmente i Presocratici, durante il Rinascimento in Europa, distinguendo due metodi esemplari di comprensione della filosofia antica che hanno assunto, per i pensatori rinascimentali, il valore di veri e propri paradigmi storiografici. Nel primo caso si tratta del modello che si appella alla *prisca scientia*, impiegato soprattutto dagli Scolastici, in cui l'assenza di una preoccupazione storico-filologica determina una considerazione strettamente teoretica della questione: le dottrine degli antichi figurano come serbatoio di nozioni, precetti, osservazioni, alle quali attingere per risolvere essenzialmente questioni concettuali. Nel secondo caso si individua il modello della *prisca sapientia*, propugnato principalmente dagli umanisti, che ascrive ai pensatori antichi la trasmissione di una sapienza originaria e divina, di carattere religioso, promotrice, in quanto conoscenza salvifica, di un rinnovamento dell'esistenza umana. Sotto questo profilo, le scelte di Agrippa sono pienamente inquadrabili nell'ambito di quest'ultimo approccio; cf. THOMAS LEINKAUF, « *Prisca scientia versus prisca sapientia*. Zwei Modelle des Umgangs mit der Tradition am Beispiel des Rückgriffs auf die Vorsokratik im Kontext der frühneuzeitlichen Debatte und der Ausbildung des Kontinuitätsmodell der *prisca sapientia* bzw. *philosophia perennis* », *Mediterranea. International Journal on the Transfer of Knowledge*, 2 (2017), p. 136: « Der Gedanke der *prisca sapientia* beinhaltet nicht nur den – einem Vorurteil oft nicht unähnlichen – Gedanken von der apriorischen, unabweisbaren, an Offenbarung oder intuitive Evidenz geknüpften *Dignität* des alten, ja ältesten Denkens gegenüber jeglichem sich nicht aus diesem selbst herleitenden späteren, bis hin zur Zeitgenossenschaft gehenden Denkens, sondern er ist unauflöslich verbunden mit dem zweiten Gedanken, daß die *prisca sapientia* nicht schlechthin vergangen und dadurch auch ebenso unausweichlich nur ex post und anachronistisch für jeden Späteren zugänglich sei, sondern daß sie, umgekehrt, kraft ihrer *Dignität* und *Autorität*, sich durch einen kontinuierlichen Überlieferungsstrom *gegenwärtig* gehalten habe. Dadurch könne ihr

L'operazione, eminentemente umanistica, è radicata nella convinzione di poter associare, ad esempio, il più autorevole degli antichi sapienti, Ermete Trismegisto, ed il più importante dei teologi cristiani, San Paolo, in un'esperienza spirituale condivisa. Quasi tutti gli opuscoli che Agrippa compone durante il soggiorno italiano – se si esclude la prolusione sul *Simposio* di Platone, risalente probabilmente al 1512,⁵ bisogna ricordare gli scritti redatti tra il 1515 e il 1516: l'*Oratio habita Papiæ in praelectione Hermetis Trismegisti De potestate et Sapientia Dei*, il *Dialogus de homine* e il *De triplici ratione cognoscendi Dei* – rimarkano per l'appunto la volontà di collocare, tramite l'accertamento della consonanza teorica tra San Paolo ed Ermete Trismegisto, l'eredità sapienziale del *Corpus Hermeticum* all'interno della tradizione dottrinale cristiana.⁶ La conformità delle dottrine ermetiche con il messaggio evangelico è giustificata, sul piano ideologico, riconoscendo al Trismegisto un'indiscussa autorità teologica per il fatto di aver attinto alla medesima fonte di verità, la rivelazione di Cristo, che ispira e permea l'epistolario paolino.⁷ Come attesta soprattutto il dittico dei già menzionati

spezifischer Gehalt [...] sozusagen direkt funktionalisiert werden für Bedürfnisse der eigenen Gegenwart: die *prisca sapientia* ist zugleich auch der Gehalt dessen, was eine *sapientia renovata* oder restituta als Antidot gegen nicht gewollte Usurpationen des religiösen Bewußtseins der eigenen Zeit fungibel macht ».

⁵ AGRIPPA, *Oratio in Praelectionem Convivij Platonis*, in *Id.*, *Orationes* X, fol. A2r–B3r.

⁶ Sull'interesse giovanile di Agrippa per la letteratura ermetica, cf. WOUTER J. HANEGRAAFF, « Better than Magic. Cornelius Agrippa and Lazzarellian Hermetism », *Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft*, 4/1 (2009), p. 6: « Agrippa's 'hermetic' period runs from 1509 to 1518, the last seven years of which he spent in Italy. It begins with his lectures on Reuchlin at the University of Dôle in 1509, which unfortunately have not been preserved. The first documented evidence we have of his hermetic interests is the first draft of *De occulta philosophia* from 1510. Five years later Agrippa lectured on Ficino's *Pimander* in Pavia. Again, these lectures themselves are lost, but we still have the introduction, known as the *Oratio habita Papiæ in praelectione Hermetis Trismegisti De potestate et Sapientia Dei*. It was followed one year later, in 1516, by a *Dialogus de Homine* of which we have only the first part, and, finally, by a complete text known as *De triplici ratione cognoscendi Deum* ».

⁷ Nella prolusione accademica dedicata al *Corpus Hermeticum*, che Agrippa declama a Pavia nel 1515, viene affermata l'identificazione del *Pimander* ermetico con Cristo stesso; cf. ZAMBELLI, *Testi scelti*, p. 125: « polliceorue vobis effecturum me totis viribus, ut nihil sit in suscepta materia tam difficile, tam intricatum, tam obscurum, tamque arduum cuicunque facultati aut scientiae ea traditio consonet, quod me interprete non assequamini omnes, intelligentia, favente nobis ipso ter maximi Mercurij Pimandro, mente divinae potentiae domino videlicet nostro Jesu Christo Nazareno crucifixo, qui verus Pimander, qui magni consilii Angelus vero mentis lumine illustrat, quem verum Deum et verum hominem, regenerationis autorem confitemur, futurique patrem seculi iudicem expectamus ». La fonte dell'identificazione e del passo testuale di Agrippa è Lazzarelli: cf. LODOVICUS LAZARELUS, *Crater Hermetis*, in *Contenta in hoc volumine. Pimander Mercurii Trismegisti liber de sapientia et potestate Dei. Asclepius Eiusdem Mercurii Liber de Voluntate Divina. Item Crater Hermetis, a Lazarelo Septempedano*, Paris 1505, fol. 60v: « qui magni consilii angelus vero mentes lumine illustravit, qui princeps pacis hominem deo conciliavit; quem verum deum et verum hominem profitemur ac futuri patrem seculi iudicemque expectamus. Ipse qui in Hermetis mente Pimander erat, in me Christus Ihesus incolatum facere dignatus est consolator

Dialogus de homine e *De triplici ratione cognoscendi Deum*,⁸ l'approccio di Agrippa al dibattito religioso riprende e innova in chiave ermetico-paolina una lezione metodologica promossa dai pensatori 'ermetici' del tardo Quattrocento – basti menzionare, oltre a Marsilio Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola e Lodovico Lazzarelli, tra i più autorevoli,⁹ ossia gli autori che maggiormente occupano gli studi di Agrippa nel periodo di formazione – con l'intento di coniugare, attraverso una strategia di calibrato equilibrio teorico, Ermetismo e Cristianesimo, riconosciuti entrambi depositari, al pari degli scritti di Platone e dei suoi seguaci tardo-antichi, di un insegnamento filosofico e soteriologico omogeneo.¹⁰

Se si considera un profilo teorico più ampio, il recupero della *prisca theologia* permette ad Agrippa di inserirsi pienamente nel vasto dibattito che coinvolge, durante le prime decadi del Cinquecento, umanisti tedeschi come Sebastian Brant, Jakob Wimpfeling, Johann Reuchlin, Ulrich von Hutten, i quali si

eternus »; cf. PERRONE COMPAGNI, « Ermetismo e Cristianesimo », p. 32–33; HANEGRAAFF, « Better than magic », p. 10, 16–17; ID., « Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa », in CHRISTOPHER PARTRIDGE (ed.), *The Occult World*, Routledge, London–New York 2016, p. 93–94.

⁸ Per il *De homine* cf. PAOLA ZAMBELLI, « Agrippa di Nettesheim. *Dialogus de homine* », (prima ed.), *Rivista critica di storia della filosofia*, 13 (1958), p. 47–71; una seconda edizione, riveduta e aggiornata, è stata pubblicata in EAD., « Cornelio Agrippa. Scritti inediti e dispersi », *Rinascimento*, 5 (1965), p. 294–304. I richiami al *Dialogus* sono tratti dall'edizione aggiornata. Per il *De triplici ratione*, cf. PERRONE COMPAGNI, *Ermetismo e Cristianesimo*, p. 52–84.

⁹ RAPHAEL EBGI (ed.), *Umanisti italiani. Pensiero e Destino*, Einaudi, Torino 2016 (I millenni), p. 341–350.

¹⁰ PERRONE COMPAGNI, « Il *De occulta philosophia* », p. 436; cf. EAD., *Ermetismo e Cristianesimo*, p. 52–53: « Ma lo scritto del 1516 [scil. *De triplici ratione cognoscendi deum*] rappresenta anche il primo luogo di esplicito ricongiungimento delle due autorità fondamentali del 'cristianesimo' di Agrippa: il profeta Ermete e l'apostolo Paolo – le figure che insieme, seppure in modi diversi, mostrano l'unico volto della religiosità umana e la continuità della sapienza classico-cristiana di contro alle spinte disgregatrici di una ragione che procede senza avvertire né i propri limiti, né la necessità di un superiore fondamento di certificazione, né l'esigenza di tradursi in un sapere attivo, ossia socialmente benefico ». Questa convergenza ermetico-paolina è verificabile testualmente in alcuni passi del *De triplici ratione* e del *Dialogus de homine*. A titolo esemplificativo, cf. AGRIPPA, *De triplici ratione cognoscendi Deum*, in PERRONE COMPAGNI, *Ermetismo e Cristianesimo*, p. 96–98: « Unde praecipitantur in turpes sensuum illecebras, in letiferas peccatorum sordes, corruunt in omne flagitium et in naturae perversionem subiiciunturque 'cupiditatum imperio, ad quarum expletionem', ut inquit Hermes, 'ardenti quodam impetu perferuntur rituque ferarum immoderato et irascuntur et cupiunt; quodque deterius est, nec finem imponunt libidini ullum, nec malorum inveniunt passionumque terminum'; quae omnia Paulus in *Epistola ad Romanos* clare edocet »; ID., *Dialogus de homine*, p. 303: « Oportet autem te (ut inquit Hermes) vestem quam circumfers exuere, indumentum inscitie, pravitatis fundamentum, corruptionis vinculum, vivam mortem, sensitivum cadaver, sepulcrum circumfertile, domesticum inimicum, de quo ait Christus: qui post me vult venire, abneget semetipsum ac tollat crucem suam et sequatur me; que crux nil aliud est quam corpus hoc materiale, quod in similitudinem crucis geritur. Hoc nos abnegare et relinquere oportet, ut cum Christo ad pristinam <in>mortalitatem revertamur. Hinc Paulus ait: cupio dissolvi et esse cum Christo ».

interrogano a più riprese sulla crisi spirituale che investe l'Europa nel suo complesso tramite un'analisi serrata delle cause per cui dilaga la corruzione dei costumi religiosi. In particolare, negli anni che precedono la diffusione del movimento luterano, la produzione di Agrippa è contrassegnata dal progetto di ricostituire il sapere magico su nuovi fondamenti. L'impegno in questa direzione, incoraggiato anche dal confronto con Johannes Trithemius, risulta profondamente influenzato non solo dalla volontà di rivalorizzazione una disciplina, la magia, screditata lungo i secoli e ripetutamente gravata dall'onta dell'eresia,¹¹ bensì soprattutto dall'urgenza di rifondare l'esperienza religiosa, ricercando, nei termini di una vera e propria *restauratio christiana*, soluzioni filosofiche che, custodite nel patrimonio che la sapienza occulta dischiude, risultino efficaci ad arrestare e contrastare la crisi spirituale contemporanea.¹²

A tal proposito, ripercorrendo una caratterizzazione ormai classica delle prerogative del mago rinascimentale – illustrata da Marsilio Ficino nell'*Apologia* al *De vita coelitus comparanda* – Agrippa avrebbe sottolineato, nell'avvertenza al lettore che apre la redazione finale dei tre libri *De occulta philosophia* (1533), l'orientamento cristiano e il fondamento evangelico di una professione ampiamente contestata:

Per i dotti mago non significa stregone, superstizioso, demoniaco, bensì sapiente, sacerdote, profeta; le Sibille fuono maghe, e perciò profetizzarono con la massima evidenza l'avvento di Cristo. Certo anche i Re Magi, comprendendo i meravigliosi arcani del mondo, seppero che era nato Cristo, il creatore del mondo, e primi fra tutti vennero ad adorarlo. Il nome stesso di magia è accettato dai filosofi, lodato dai teologi e gradito persino al Vangelo.¹³

¹¹ Sulla *vindicatio magiae* cf. la lettera dedicatoria a Trithemius in AGRIPPA, *Ioanni Tritemio Henricus Cornelius Agrippa*, in ID., *De occulta philosophia*, p. 70: « Mirabar admodum neque minus etiam indignabar neminem hactenus extitisse, qui tam sublimem sacramque disciplinam ab impietatis crimine vindicasset aut illam nobis pure syncereque tradidisset siquidem quos ex recentioribus ego vidi [...] cum se magiam tradere pollicentur, nonnisi aut deliramenta quaedam, nulla ratione subnixa, aut superstitiones probis omnibus indignas praestiterunt. Hinc concitus est in me spiritus meus atque propter ipsam cum admirationem tum indignationem volui et ego philosophari, non illaudabile opus me facturum existimans [...] si magiam ipsam vetustam sapientumque omnium disciplinam ab impietatis erroribus redimitam purgatamque et suis rationibus adornatam restituerem et ab iniuria calumniantium vindicarem ».

¹² PERRONE COMPAGNI, « Riforma della magia », p. 120: « La restaurazione della magia si traduce, in ultima analisi, nel recupero della sua matrice originariamente religiosa; l'illuminazione, che si realizza per libera iniziativa divina in una mente preparata a riceverla, determina la metamorfosi del filosofo in mago e la trasformazione del sapere razionale in potere taumaturgico ».

¹³ AGRIPPA, *Ad lectorem*, in ID., *De occulta philosophia libri tres*, ed. PERRONE COMPAGNI, p. 65: « magum apud literatos viros non maleficum, non superstitiosum, non daemoniacum sonare, sed sapientem, sed sacerdotem, sed prophetam; Sybillas magas fuisse, proinde de Christo tam apertissime prophetasse; iam vero et Magos ex mirabilibus mundi arcanis ipsius mundi autorem

La determinazione del valore della magia, in cui sia ascritta al mago una funzione sacrale, oltretutto sapienziale, per il contesto teologico cristiano, non rappresenta l'esito di una riflessione occasionale, bensì una premessa o, piuttosto, una preoccupazione teorica tenacemente viva nel pensiero di Agrippa; essa risale in realtà al periodo della primissima formazione, tra Colonia, Parigi e Londra (1499–1510), e prosegue concretizzandosi durante tutto il soggiorno in Italia.¹⁴ Accolta, infatti, la lezione di Erasmo da Rotterdam, di cui si dichiarerà strenuo difensore e appassionato seguace, anche il filosofo di Nettesheim persegue un ideale di rinnovamento del culto religioso tramite il recupero della devozione originaria e autenticamente cristiana – di cui offrono vivida testimonianza i primi discepoli di Gesù e i Padri della Chiesa – come presupposto per rifondare la teologia nel suo insieme e, a partire dalla teologia, riorganizzare tutto il sapere.¹⁵

Christum cognovisse natum omniumque primos venisse ad illum adorandum ipsumque magiae nomen acceptum philosophis, laudatum a theologis, etiam ipsi Evangelio non ingratum»; cf. MARSILIUS FICINUS, *Apologia*, in Id., *Opera omnia*, Henricuspetrus, Basileae 1576, t. I, p. 573: « Quid igitur expavescis Magi nomen formidolose? Nomen evangelio gratiosum, quod non maleficum et veneficum, sed sapientem sonat et sacerdotem. Quidnam profitetur Magus ille, venerator Christi primus? Si cupis audire, quasi quidam agricola est, certe quidam mundicola est. Nec propterea mundum hic adorat, quemadmodum nec agricola terram, sed sicut agricola humani victus gratia ad aerem temperat agrum, sic ille sapiens, ille sacerdos gratia salutis humanae inferiora mundi ad superiora contemperat; atque sicut ova gallinae, sic opportune terrena subicit fovenda coelo. Quod efficit semper ipse Deus, et faciendo docet suadetque facere, ut a superis infima generentur et moveantur atque regantur ».

¹⁴ La biografia di Agrippa è stata oggetto di tre studi importanti, dei quali il più recente costituisce ancora oggi la ricostruzione più attendibile e aggiornata: cf. HENRY MORLEY, *Cornelius Agrippa. The life of Henry Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, doctor and knight, commonly known as a magician*, 2 vols., Chapman and Hall, London 1856; AUGUSTE PROST, *Les sciences et les arts occultes au xvi^e siècle: Corneille Agrippa. Sa vie et ses oeuvres*, 2 vols., Champion, Paris 1882; NAUERT, *Agrippa and the Crisis*, 1965. Per quanto riguarda il periodo di formazione che precede il trasferimento in Italia (1499–1510) è utile ripercorrere brevemente alcune informazioni biografiche. Agrippa si forma nella prima decade del Cinquecento presso l'università di Colonia sotto la guida di Andreas e Jacobus Canter, rinomati docenti di lingua latina, fortemente critici del lessico scolastico e appassionati cultori dell'arte lulliana. Successivamente conclude gli studi legali in *utroque iure* e ottiene il dottorato in medicina. Ancora a Colonia entra a far parte del circolo di Hermann von Neuenahr e Johannes Caesarius, intellettuali pubblicamente impegnati nella difesa di Johannes Reuchlin contro i Domenicani durante la disputa sulla conservazione dei libri ebraici. Nel 1509, a ventitré anni, tiene alcune lezioni sul *De verbo mirifico* di Reuchlin a Dôle in Borgogna. Qualche tempo dopo, nel 1510, per il tramite degli umanisti coloniensi, Agrippa incontra a Würzburg l'abate Trithemius, grazie alle cui sollecitazioni prenderà corpo l'idea di restaurare la magia. A Trithemius l'autore dedicherà la prima stesura del *De occulta philosophia*. Nello stesso anno Agrippa si reca a Londra per seguire le lezioni del teologo John Colet, sotto la cui supervisione studia approfonditamente le *Epistole* di San Paolo. Cf. in particolare ZAMBELLI, *Cornelio Agrippa nelle fonti*, p. 174–177; VAN DER POEL, *Cornelius Agrippa*, p. 15–21.

¹⁵ Sull'influenza degli scritti di Erasmo nell'evoluzione del pensiero di Agrippa, cf. soprattutto ZAMBELLI, « Cornelio Agrippa, Erasmo », p. 29–88; EAD., « Scritti inediti e dispersi », p. 198–199.

Tuttavia, a differenza di Erasmo, la strategia di Agrippa prevede che il traguardo di rinascita spirituale sia raggiunto non solo riscoprendo la *pietas* neotestamentaria, nonché riesaminando il contributo dottrinale della Patristica, bensì soprattutto integrando nel paradigma teologico cristiano la *pia philosophia* degli antichissimi sapienti, specialmente la religiosità e il tragitto sapienziale descritti in dettaglio nel *Corpus Hermeticum*.¹⁶ L'orientamento della ricerca in questa direzione è ispirato anche all'opera di esegesi e diffusione degli *Hermetica* promossa in particolar modo da Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, la cui edizione parigina del 1505 – che includeva il *Pimander* tradotto da Ficino, l'*Asclepius* attribuito ad Apuleio e il *Crater Hermetis* composto da Lazzarelli – sarà presente costantemente sullo scritto di Agrippa, assieme ad altre edizioni dello *Stapulensis*, quali, ad esempio, le *Epistole* di Paolo, gli scritti di Lullo e di Cusano.¹⁷ Coerentemente con il suo progetto di studio, commento e trasmissione della più antica sapienza pagana, Agrippa avrebbe dedicato persino un ciclo di lezioni universitarie ai trattati ermetici. In veste di professore di teologia, assunto a Pavia nel 1515, avrebbe esposto e commentato il *Pimander*, giudicando i trattati del Trismegisto un insegnamento propedeutico alla comprensione dei più reconditi misteri della religione:

Parliamo adesso della sua opera, intitolata *Pimander, o della sapienza e potenza di Dio*. È un libro ricchissimo di eleganza stilistica, ricolmo di massime, pieno di grazia e di decoro, pieno di sapienza e di misteri. Ci insegna a conoscere Dio, il mondo, la mente, i due demoni, l'anima, l'ordine della provvidenza, la necessità del fato e da dove essa provenga, la legge di natura, il diritto degli uomini, la religione, le istituzioni sacre, i riti, i templi, le tradizioni e i misteri sacri. Ci istruisce inoltre sulla conoscenza di se stessi, sull'ascesa dell'intelletto, sulle preghiere arcane, sul connubio divino, sul sacramento della rigenerazione e, per riassumere brevemente il tutto, ci insegna a conoscere e comprendere le leggi delle cerimonie consacrate, i precetti dei riti sacri, le norme delle pratiche religiose, come dobbiamo ottenere la

¹⁶ PERRONE COMPAGNI, « Il *De occulta philosophia* », p. 436: « Sono i testi ermetici a sostanziare il costante appello di Agrippa a una non più procrastinabile *reformatio* (della cultura, della magia, della morale contemporanea) che si costituisca come premessa per l'affermarsi di una 'filosofia incontaminata', come appunto la definiva l'*Asclepius* – una filosofia, cioè, che sappia riconoscere in Dio il suo centro di irraggiamento e il suo punto di ritorno »; cf. VAN DER POEL, *Cornelius Agrippa*, p. 264: « On the whole, he [scil. Agrippa] shows himself to be a genuine humanist, who detests the moral and intellectual climate then prevailing in the Church, although his emphasis on spiritual introspection and the important role of the *prisca theologia* in his theology secure for him a special place among the humanists ».

¹⁷ Sulla diffusione del *Corpus Hermeticum* in Francia e sull'opera editoriale di Lefèvre d'Étaples, cf. DANIEL P. WALKER, *The Ancient theology. Studies in Christian Platonism from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, Duckworth, London 1972, p. 63–131.

felicità e come dobbiamo coltivare correttamente la nostra mente, con la quale soltanto possiamo apprendere la verità.¹⁸

La decisione di presentare le dottrine di Ermete come un modello per ripensare il valore della teologia cristiana, nonché il ruolo sociale di chi la esercita, non ha, dunque, un fondamento erudito; non è semplicemente frutto dell'entusiasmo umanistico per la letteratura antica, ossia per un sapere alternativo alla cultura ufficiale. La riscoperta rinascimentale dell'ermetismo, e con esso la riorganizzazione della magia, che in Agrippa trova uno degli esponenti più radicali, ha in realtà un significato di rinnovamento marcatamente religioso e politico. L'antropologia elaborata nelle pagine dell'*Asclepius* latino presentava un elogio esemplare della natura umana e della sua collocazione nel cosmo, in cui veniva accertato il ruolo essenziale, metafisico ed epistemologico al contempo, che l'uomo riveste collaborando con Dio nella cura dell'universo e nell'amministrazione del creato. Inoltre, secondo una lezione comune trasmessa nei trattati greci che formano il *Pimander*, l'autore ermetico celebrava nelle facoltà dell'uomo l'unione armoniosa di religione (*fides*) e sapienza (*mens*), concordanza indispensabile per apprendere le verità custodite nella mente di Dio.¹⁹ Sotto questa luce la rivelazione ermetica proponeva agli occhi di Agrippa un modello etico-filosofico, incarnato per l'appunto dal leggendario Ermete Trismegisto, in cui la vocazione religiosa del sapiente racchiude in una destinazione comune teologia e magia, regalità e giustizia.²⁰ Nella prolusione del

¹⁸ Il passo è tratto dall'unica testimonianza diretta del corso universitario, il testo edito della prolusione: cf. AGRIPPA, *Oratio habita Papiae*, p. 124: « De opere illius [scil. Trismegistus] modo dicamus. Ejus titulus est Pimander, sive de Sapientia et potestate Dei. Est autem liber iste elegantia sermonis refertissimus, copia sententiarum gravissimus, plenus gratiae et decoris, plenus sapientiae et mysteriorum. Docet enim nos, quis Deus, quis mundus, quid mens, quid uterque daemon, quid anima, quis providentiae ordo, quae et unde fati necessitas, quae naturae lex, quod hominum phas, quae religio, quae sacra instituta, ritus, phana, observationes sacraque mysteria. Instruit nos praeterea de cognitione sui ipsius, de ascensu intellectus, de arcanis precibus, de divino connubio, deque regenerationis sacramento, atque, ut paucis cuncta complectar, docet nos rite scire atque callere leges divinorum, phas sacrorum, jusque religionum, et quo pacto felicitatem religione divina debeamus adipisci, quoque pacto mentem nostram, qua sola veritatem apprehendere possumus, rite debeamus excolere ».

¹⁹ *Ascl.* III, fol. 40v (NF 2, pp. 301–301): « Propter hoc, o Asclepi, magnum miraculum est homo, animal adorandum et honorandum. Hoc enim in naturam dei transit, quasi ipse sit deus; hoc demonum genus novit, utpote qui cum eisdem ortum se esse cognoscat; hoc humane nature partem in se ispo despicit, alterius partis divinitate confisus »; *Pim.*, XII, fol. 30v [NF 1, pp. 178–179]: « Illud preterea considera, o fili, quod duo hec soli ex omnibus animalibus homini Deus ipse largitus est, sermonem scilicet atque mentem, quequidem eiusdem (ac immortalitas) premii esse censentur. Iis quisque ad id quod decet utitur, nihil ab immortalibus discrepat. Quinetiam corporis solutus compedibus, ab utrisque ducetur in chorum beatorum simul atque deorum ».

²⁰ PERRONE COMPAGNI, « *Dispersa intentio* », p. 166: « The magician is the hermetic 'perfect philosopher', not because enlightenment endows him with a wisdom that is alternative to

1515 Agrippa avrebbe fornito una ricostruzione encomiastica della biografia di Ermete Trismegisto (tre volte grandissimo perché al contempo *philosophus*, *sacerdos* e *rex*), traendo spunto dalle genealogie presentate soprattutto nelle fonti coeve come l'*Argumentum in librum Mercurii Trismegisti* di Ficino, il *Crater* di Lazzarelli, l'*Epistola de astronomiae auctoribus* di Agostino Ricci e, probabilmente, il *Commentarium* redatto da Symphorien Champier alle *Diffinitiones Asclepii* che Lazzarelli aveva tradotto dal greco:²¹

Dopo aver indagato a fondo tutto il sentiero della sapienza, egli per primo, con poche parole, ma smisuratamente ricche di significato, scrisse a proposito della vera sapienza. Egli, prima di tutti, trattò con somma sapienza della maestà di Dio, dell'ordine degli spiriti, della natura delle anime. Perciò fu definito il primo inventore e fondatore della teologia. Si tramanda che, avendo compreso i fondamenti della religione, scrisse ventiseimilacinquecentoventicinque libri, nei quali rivela arcani mirabili, misteri segretissimi e oracoli meravigliosi. E non parlò soltanto come filosofo, bensì anche come profeta, presagendo molti eventi. Infatti prevede e vaticinò la rovina dell'antica religione, la nascita della nuova fede, l'avvento di Cristo, il giudizio futuro, la resurrezione dei morti, il rinnovamento dell'epoca, la gloria dei beati, la punizione dei peccatori. [...] Questo nostro Mercurio, così come superò tutti i filosofi per l'acume della sua intelligenza, allo stesso modo, divenuto sacerdote, superò tutti i sacerdoti per il modo in cui conduceva una vita santa e amministrava il culto del divino. Perciò il rispetto di cui godeva tra gli uomini crebbe a tal punto che gli Egizi lo chiamarono re, dopo Osiride. [...] Ottenuta quindi la dignità regia, Mercurio oscurò la gloria degli altri re per il modo in cui istituiva le leggi, amministrava il regno e compiva grandi imprese. A buon diritto fu definito Trismegisto, ossia tre volte massimo, poiché egli si dimostrò il massimo e sapientissimo filosofo, il massimo e religiosissimo

rational knowledge, but because the *sense* of human knowledge is disclosed to him by the experience of spiritual regeneration, which also enables him to put science into practice. Yet reason still has the task of assembling the elements of a vast and refined culture, upon which fides bestows dynamism, thereby raising it to the level of knowledge and power. Magic is the result of man's attitude towards God. It is the fruit of a correct orientation and the reward for a willed and trusting adherence to the divine message imprinted in the heart of man. This is why the reform of magic calls primarily for man's spiritual reform, the reorientation of his reason, and a re-appropriated awareness of his destiny ».

²¹ Cf. FICINUS, *Argumentum Marsilij Ficini Florentini in librum Mercurij Trismegisti ad Cosmum Medicem*, in *Contenta in hoc volumine*, fol. 2r–3v; AUGUSTINUS RITIUS, *De motu octavae sphaerae* [...] *Item ejusdem Epistola de astronomie auctoribus*, in *aedibus Joannis de Ferrariis*, Tridini 1513; LAZARELLUS, *Lodouici Lazareli Poete Christiani ad Ferdinandum Regem dialogus cui titulus Crater Hermetis*, in *Contenta in hoc volumine*, fol. 60v–81v; SYMPHORIANUS CHAMPERIUS, *Commentarium in Asclepij Mercurij Trismegisti discipuli diffinitiones theologicas ad Ammonem regem*, ed. CESARE VASOLI, in ENRICO CASTELLI (ed.), *Umanesimo ed Esoterismo. Atti del 5. Convegno internazionale di studi umanistici, Oberhofen, 16–17 settembre 1960*, CEDAM, Padova 1960 [*Archivio di filosofia: organo della Società filosofica italiana*, 2/3 (1960)], p. 260–289; PERRONE COMPAGNI, « Ermetismo e Cristianesimo », p. 35–36.

sacerdote, il massimo e gloriosissimo re. Per questa ragione il popolo, ammirando la sua virtù, gli consacrò onori divini.²²

Il sapiente ermetico, considerato espressione armonica del mago sacerdote, profeta e legislatore, offriva quindi ai Cristiani un esempio reverendo ed encomiabile, oltretutto accreditato per la sua vetustà e consonanza col messaggio di Cristo, a cui attingere nell'ottica di formare un teologo cristiano, cioè un interprete meritevole e autorevole della Parola di Dio.

²² AGRIPPA, *Oratio habita Papiae*, p. 123–124: « Primus qui omnem sapientiae semitam perscrutatus, oratione licet modica, immensa tamen sententiis, de vera sapientia scripsit. Primus omnium de majestate Dei, de ordine spirituum, de animarum naturis sapientissime disseruit. Primus itaque theologiae appellatus est autor et inventor; ferturque universalis sacrorum complexus, conscripsisse viginti sex milia, quingenta et viginti quinque librorum volumina, in quibus admiranda arcana, secretissimique mysteria ac stupenda pandit oracula; non enim ut Philosophus duntaxat locutus est, verum etiam ut propheta multa praesagivit. Nam priscae religionis ruinae, novae fidei ortum, Christi adventum, futurum iudicium, mortuorum resurrectionem, renovationem saeculi, beatorum gloriam, peccatorum tormenta praevidit atque praedixit. [...] Hic itaque Mercurius noster, ut acumine intelligentiae philosophos omnes excessit, ita sacerdos perinde constitutus sanctimoniae vitae, divinarumque cultu universis sacerdotibus praestitit; unde in tanta hominum veneratione habitus est, ut post Osyridem ab Aegyptiis rex appellaretur. [...] Regiam itaque dignitatem adeptus Mercurius, consuetudine legum, administratione regni ac gestorum magnitudine, caeterorum regum gloriam obscuravit, unde merito Trismegistus, hoc est, ter maximus nuncupatus est, quoniam maximus et sapientissimus philosophus, maximus ac religiosissimus sacerdos, maximus ac gloriosissimus rex extiterit, quapropter pro suae virtutis admiratione divinos honores populus illi consecravat ». Sulla genealogia di Ermete che Agrippa propone in versione aggiornata cf. PERRONE COMPAGNI, *Ermetismo e Cristianesimo*, p. 35–36: « Sebbene fosse l'*Argumentum* di Ficino a fornire lo schema di tale biografia, Agrippa se ne distaccava in un punto non secondario. La genealogia ficiniana, affidandosi alla testimonianza di Agostino, faceva risalire il Trismegisto alla stirpe dell'astrologo Atlante, contemporaneo di Mosè: la collocazione di Ermete quattro generazioni più tardi rispetto alla rivelazione di Dio a Mosè permetteva di giustificare le profezie pagane di Ermete e la loro concordanza con la religione ebraico-cristiana entro la tradizionale spiegazione agostiniana della *iniusta possessio*. Il *Crater Hermetis* di Lazzarelli aveva invece rovesciato la cauta ricostruzione ficiniana, proponendo l'audace *coniectura* [...] che all'egizio Ermete dovesse essere fatta risalire l'origine della vera sapienza, da lui poi trasmessa agli Ebrei. Anche Agrippa data la vita di Ermete a un tempo precedente Mosè; ma ne faceva un ebreo: egli era Enoch, figlio di uno dei molti figli che Abramo aveva generato dalle sue concubine dopo la morte di Sara. Nel riportare il personaggio e il suo insegnamento a una originaria appartenenza al popolo ebraico, Agrippa rendeva omaggio ad Agostino Ricci, che nella *Epistola de astronomiae auctoribus* aveva appunto sostenuto tale genealogia. [...] Ermete, ebreo, ma vissuto prima di Mosè, si situava così nel tempo indistinto tra prima e seconda manifestazione di Dio, ma era tacitamente innalzato al rango dei grandi patriarchi biblici ».

II

Se si considera in un quadro strettamente ideologico la restaurazione della magia assieme al recupero della devozione ermetica, l'operazione di Agrippa esprime attivamente la necessità di liberare le Sacre Scritture dal peso della tradizione scolastica, mirando a ridisegnare in forma calibrata i contorni mutevoli dell'ortodossia. Ai teologi contemporanei di formazione scolastica il filosofo imputa la responsabilità culturale e morale di aver frainteso e corrotto il nucleo originario di verità contenuto nelle Sacre Scritture. Costoro, per mezzo di un impiego indisciplinato della ragione umana, si barricano dietro le sottigliezze del pensiero aristotelico per sezionare, glossare, manipolare e adulterare il testo sacro, risultando così del tutto incapaci di cogliere, al di là della lettera e dei pregiudizi che su di essa erigono, il significato della Parola: quel messaggio recondito che Dio stesso ha rivelato a tutti, ma al contempo riservato in forma autentica e più elevata soltanto agli uomini che, per il tramite della fede e della sapienza, si siano resi meritevoli di riceverlo.²³

Nel *De triplici ratione cognoscendi Deum*, risalente al 1516 ma consegnato all'editore solo nel 1529, Agrippa sarà pugnacemente impegnato a ripensare il concetto di teologia, rimarcando l'incompatibilità della professione teologica, genuinamente concepita ed esercitata, con l'attività pseudoscientifica che i dottori scolastici praticano correntemente nelle università.²⁴ Tale

²³ EAD., « Riforma della magia », p. 122: « Restaurare la magia nel suo primitivo significato di 'sapientia' religiosa – strumento di invernamento della scienza in quanto coincidente col contenuto della rivelazione divina – impone preliminarmente una presa di posizione nei confronti della scienza contemporanea. Bisogna indicare le contraddizioni, l'inutilità pratica e soprattutto i disastrosi effetti morali di una ragione che si è allontanata dalla fonte originaria della sapienza, che ha voluto procedere autonomamente, che crede di poter afferrare persino Dio con i suoi sillogismi: una ragione la cui immagine speculare è la società contemporanea, fatua, immorale, arrogante, lontana dalla erasmiana 'simplicitas' di chi si predispone, fiducioso ma 'attivo', alla rivelazione divina, dispensatrice di una sapienza che diviene anche potenza, possibilità di pratica trasformazione ».

²⁴ EAD., « Della vanità delle scienze: note di lettura », *Bruniana & Campanelliana*, 11 (2005), p. 131: « Qui [scil. nel *De triplici ratione*] Agrippa delineava le tre strade per giungere alla conoscenza di Dio, collocandole in una scala di progressiva perfezione e compiutezza: la scienza pagana, che muove dalle creature al Creatore; la cabala ebraica, che conosce Dio attraverso l'interpretazione della Legge e con il ministero degli angeli; infine la vera conoscenza attraverso Cristo nel libro del Vangelo, luce piena del meriggio che dirada la caligine del libro delle creature e rischiarà l'umbratilità del libro della Legge. Questa successione cronologica nel manifestarsi di Dio all'uomo contiene l'abbozzo di una serie di principi che costituiranno più tardi il nucleo del credo religioso di Agrippa, equamente lontano da ogni chiesa magisteriale, da Roma come dalla Riforma: l'evento della redenzione è una svolta provvidenziale che ha cancellato una volta per tutte la condizione storica dell'uomo macchiato dal peccato originale, riconducendolo alla perfezione del suo momento iniziale e restituendogli la pienezza di ragione e volontà – il libero arbitrio risanato; Dio ha predestinato universalmente gli uomini; nell'individuo risiede la

differenziazione si appella alla distinzione tra i due livelli di approccio al dettato scritturistico, letterale e allegorico, legittimati a partire dalla complessità del messaggio biblico, la cui comprensione certamente è stata destinata dalla divinità a tutti gli uomini, ma è stata riservata in un modo agli *imbecilliores*, in un altro ai *perfecti*. La confusione tra i due livelli, nonché l'impossibilità di sciogliere nelle sue verità l'impianto metaforico-spirituale delle Scritture, attesta per Agrippa non solo l'incompetenza metodologica dei teologi scolastici, bensì soprattutto la crisi teorica nella quale si è arenata la teologia contemporanea, incapace di identificare il proprio oggetto di studio, di insegnarlo correttamente, di predicarlo nella devozione autentica, nonché di esercitare nel nome di Cristo, al pari degli Apostoli, virtù profetiche o facoltà miracolose:

Infatti anche il Vangelo, come la legge mosaica, presenta un significato superficiale, destinato alle persone più deboli, e un significato interno, che è stato rivelato separatamente ai perfetti – nel senso spiegato da Paolo agli Ebrei, [...] quando dice: 'Se volete essere condotti alla dottrina perfetta di Cristo, dovete lasciare l'insegnamento iniziale, nel quale cioè si trattano i principi e i fondamenti della sapienza divina che riguardano la penitenza dalle opere morte, il battesimo, i sacramenti, l'imposizione delle mani e l'autorità di assoluzione, la resurrezione dei morti e il giudizio eterno' e gli altri argomenti analoghi, che sono tutti contenuti nell'involucro del Vangelo e sono trattati nelle aule dai teologi scolastici e sono ridotti in problemi da soppesare e da discutere. Le altre conoscenze che invece attengono alla sapienza più alta e alla dottrina perfetta – cioè quale sia 'il dono celeste' e 'la manna riposta, che nessuno conosce se non colui che la riceve', e quale sia la buona parola di Dio, migliore di quella che è trasmessa al volgo in parabole, e quale sia 'il mistero del regno di Dio, che è dato conoscere solo ai discepoli più fidati', e quali le virtù del tempo futuro, quale l'origine e il fine dell'anima e le funzioni degli spiriti angelici, quale la condizione e la qualità di quell'immensa gloria e felicità che attendiamo, [...] – tutte queste conoscenze sono contenute all'interno del Vangelo e nel suo nucleo e sono note soltanto ai perfetti: a loro è stata elargita la scienza delle potenze e delle virtù, dei miracoli e della profezia e di ciò che gli uomini non possono indagare con le proprie forze, a meno che non si siano assoggettati alla virtù dello Spirito santo.²⁵

responsabilità di aderire o meno all'offerta divina e quindi la sua salvezza o la sua condanna eterna; la fede si effonde in doni di grazia: non soltanto in buone opere, ma anche e soprattutto in miracoli. La rigenerazione apre la via verso la perfezione, fino al compenetramento con la divinità: ci si fa figli di Dio, ci si trasforma in Colui di cui siamo immagine ».

²⁵ AGRIPPA, *De triplici ratione*, p. 148-150: « Habet enim etiam Evangelium, quemadmodum lex mosaica, aliud in cortice propositum imbecillioribus, aliud in medulla, quod segregatim revelatum est perfectis [I Cor. 2, 6-7], sicut de illis loquitur Paulus ad Hebraeos [...] inquit: 'Si ferri vultis ad perfectam Christi doctrinam, omittendus est sermo incohationis, in quo videlicet tractatur de principiis et fundamentis divinae sapientiae quae sunt de poenitentia ab operibus mortuis, de baptisate, de sacramentis, de impositione manuum et de auctoritate absolventi, de resurrectione mortuorum et iudicii aeternio' et eiusmodi, quae omnia habentur in cortice

Ancor prima di formulare questa distinzione fondamentale, Agrippa ritiene urgente denunciare l'imperizia dottrinale e la corruzione morale dei 'Magistri nostri', i quali mancano della 'intelligentia Scripturarum'. Imbevuti del lessico teorico di Aristotele e di Averroè, irrobustiti poi nelle pieghe del frasario scotista e tomista, essi ignorano le *bonae litterae*, ossia l'educazione letteraria imprescindibile per accostarsi a una testualità complessa, storicamente stratificata e linguisticamente composita, come quella delle Sacre Scritture.²⁶ Al contrario, servendosi artificiosamente della dialettica e della logica per decifrare i misteri divini, gli Scolastici sobillano la ragione umana a scapito di una fede sincera e incontaminata, ferma nella ricezione del messaggio di Cristo; dedicandosi soltanto a chiosare, postillare e commentare senza fine singoli passi della Scrittura, promuovono sterili controversie in campo dottrinale, allontanando i Cristiani dalla verità del Vangelo:

Ma ci sono alcuni altri che parlano con le lingue, gonfi di scienza umana; che, anzi, non arrossiscono nel pronunciare le loro menzogne su Dio con la vita e con la lingua; che con lo spirito impudentemente piegano tutta la Scrittura alle proprie bugie; che misurano i misteri divini con il metodo della ragione umana; che, corrompendo la parola di Dio, con sacrileghe glosse tratte fuori dalle loro teste, stabiliscono le loro invenzioni fantastiche; che, come ladri e furfanti, follemente si

Evangelii et in scholis tractantur a scholasticis theologis et in problemata disputanda et discutienda deducuntur. Illa autem pertinentia ad meliorem sapientiam et perfectam doctrinam – videlicet quod sit 'donum coeleste' et 'manna absconditum, quod nemo scit nisi qui accipit', et quod sit bonum Dei verbum, melius illo quod foris vulgo traditur in parabolis, quodque 'mysterium regni Dei datum nosse solis secretioribus discipulis', et quae virtutes saeculi futuri, quae origo et finis animae et ministeria angelicorum spirituumq, quae conditio et qualitas illius immensae gloriae et felicitatis quam expectamus, quam 'nec oculus vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit' – haec omnia continentur in medulla et nucleo Evangelii et non nisi perfectioribus cognita sunt; quibus data est scientia potestatum et virtutum, miraculorum et prophetiae et cetera, quae homines propriis viribus indagare non possunt, nisi qui subiecti fuerint virtuti Spiritus sancti [Georgius, *Harm. mun.*, II, 5, 9, fol. 275r] ». La traduzione dei passi tratti dal *De triplici ratione* è di Perrone Compagni. Come rileva la studiosa, il passo riportato, originariamente assente nella stesura manoscritta del *De triplici ratione*, costituisce un'interessante integrazione testuale dovuta alla lettura del *De harmonia mundi* di Francesco Zorzi, pubblicato a Venezia nel 1525. Il brano fu dunque inserito nel corso della revisione a cui Agrippa sottopose l'opuscolo poco tempo prima di stamparlo ad Anversa nel 1529; cf. PERRONE COMPAGNI, *Ermetismo e Cristianesimo*, p. 74–75.

²⁶ Cf. AGRIPPA, *Defensio propositionum*, fol. Cv: « Quod ut melius efficiam, nescio an modo mihi necessarium sit supercilium, nasusque theologicus et obvinctum tot fasciis caput, quodque magistrorum nostrorum, ut vocatis, glossas, postillas, conblicationes, resumptiones, reportata, pariter atque pugnancia invicem vocabula, nominalium realium, primarum ac secundarum, inventionum, propriarum et impropriarum, implicitorum et explicitorum sensuum, et reliquas scholasticarum nugarum voces, scotistarum vel thomistarum spiritu aliquando fuerim edoctus ».

arrogano il santo titolo di teologi, mentre la loro unica fatica si riduce a contese e risse verbali.²⁷

Arrogandosi il possesso della tradizione e il sigillo dell'ortodossia, essi screditano gli interpreti più validi e riconosciuti dalla tradizione, diffondono interpretazioni erranee o storie inventate, alimentando così i conflitti e l'eresia nella comunità dei fedeli. Se posti a confronto con i Padri della Chiesa, gli Scolastici si dimostrano pericolosamente impreparati a livello dottrinale, poiché ricercano una conferma delle verità di fede in luoghi diversi dalle Scritture, come i testi di Aristotele o di altri filosofi pagani, trascurando così il Vangelo, la fonte primaria, indispensabile anche soltanto per avviare un discorso teologico legittimo.²⁸ Sul piano strettamente esegetico sono sprovvisti di un metodo rigorosamente fondato: non sanno decodificare le numerose oscurità della narrazione biblica collazionando, ad esempio, passi simili delle Scritture al fine di individuare gli *absconditi sensus* del Verbo di Dio. Senza nemmeno onorare umilmente l'autorità degli uomini santi che li hanno preceduti, offrendo nelle opere e nelle parole testimonianza della vera fede, rigettano la lezione degli antichi dottori, i quali,

²⁷ ID., *De triplici ratione*, p. 154: « Sed sunt quidam alii, qui linguis loquuntur, humanis scientiis inflati, imo qui vita et lingua de Deo mentiri non erubescunt, qui suo spiritu omnem Scripturam ad sua mendacia impudentissime torquent ac mysteria divina ad humanae rationis methodum exigunt inventisque e capitibus suis glossis sacrilegis, adulterato verbo Dei [II Cor. 2, 17], sua portenta stabiliunt ac a sanctum theologiae nomen furto et rapina sibi temere usurpant solisque operam dant contentionibus et rixosis disputationibus ».

²⁸ Questo principio metodologico sarà ribadito anche in un opuscolo apparentemente controverso, nel quale Agrippa si interroga sul valore della *Ethnicorum philosophia* per la formazione di un cristiano, specialmente di un teologo. Si tratta della *Dehortatio gentilis theologiae*, la cui redazione originaria risale all'incirca alla fine del soggiorno in Italia per poi essere rielaborata nel 1526. Scritta su invito di alcuni sodali ecclesiastici, appassionati lettori del *Corpus Hermeticum* e dei filosofi neoplatonici cari ad Agrippa (Plotino, Porfirio, Giamblico, Proclo), l'orazione dissuasoria si presenta come un'invettiva contro la letteratura pagana, pericolosamente responsabile di sviare i Cristiani dalla dottrina del Vangelo, fonte esclusiva della verità teologica. Nonostante l'opuscolo sembri confutare apertamente l'impostazione umanistica caldeggiata da Agrippa, l'oratore chiude il suo discorso ribaltando la condanna appena espressa e rivalutando completamente la letteratura pagana. La sapienza dei Gentili, a parere di Agrippa, non costituisce pericolo per il buon cristiano e, conseguentemente, non merita il suo disprezzo, poiché contiene insegnamenti conformi alla dottrina di Cristo. Il cristiano potrà accogliere e persino professare apertamente alcune dottrine filosofiche dei Pagani, ma solo nel caso in cui egli abbia saldamente interiorizzato e irrobustito nella propria coscienza il messaggio evangelico: cf. AGRIPPA, *Dehortatio gentilis theologiae*, in ID., *De Nobilitate & Praecellentia Foeminei sexus, ad Margaretam Augustam Austriaco(rum) et Burgundionum Principem...*, Michael Hillenius in Rapo, Antverpiae 1529, fol. Iv–I2r: « Nam ad divinarum rerum veridicam cognitionem puro animo opus est et non infecto pravis opinionibus. [...] Igitur in theologico studio nihil vobis prius esse debet quam evangelica doctrina [2 Th., 2, 14] »; Ibid., fol. H6r: « Quicunque enim Dei notitiam aliunde quam ab Evangelio parandam putant, ii vere sunt qui Spiritum sanctum incessunt; quae blasphemia neque in hoc neque in futuro saeculo remittitur ».

sostenuti dallo Spirito divino, fornirono con esposizioni e commentari una via privilegiata per accedere alle verità rivelate.²⁹ L'arroganza di cui essi si rendono espressione fomenta così la loro illusione di poter « tutto saggiare, affrontare, risolvere e interpretare », ossia ricondurre i più alti enigmi della religione ai fantasmi, alle illusioni e persuasioni della ragione umana:³⁰

E, a questo punto, tutto ciò che nella fede e nella religione è semplice, schietto e puro costoro hanno reso molteplice, oscuro e sudicio. Con le loro assurde schermaglie e la loro futile loquacità hanno sfigurato, perturbato, contaminato tutta la teologia; e hanno fabbricato non una teologia divina e neppure umana, bensì una qualche loro, non dirò certo 'teologia', ma una rozza, odiosa, capziosa e diabolica vanità, una rapsodia di umane opinioni e di frottole filosofiche.³¹

La presunzione dei dottori scolastici non si limita solo al campo dottrinale, ma si ripercuote inevitabilmente sulla condotta pubblica. La comunità dei fedeli scopre in essi la miseria morale di uomini soggiogati al vigore durevole delle passioni, i quali esibiscono uno stile di vita segnato a tal punto dal vizio e dall'avidità di potere, da risultare indegno per un teologo di professione. Denunciare la corruzione morale e spirituale delle figure incaricate di formare le coscienze costituisce una rivendicazione costante nel programma culturale di Agrippa.³² La

²⁹ Sotto questo profilo l'approccio di Agrippa alla letteratura patristica, al di là dell'influsso di Erasmo, è paragonabile a quello di Lorenzo Valla, cf. CRISTOPHER S. CELENZA, *Il Rinascimento perduto. La letteratura latina nella cultura italiana del Quattrocento*, Carocci, Roma 2004 (Lingue e letterature Carocci, 176), p. 187: « Valla, come tutti gli umanisti, era profondamente immerso negli autori classici non cristiani, ma l'antichità cristiana aveva per lui un significato speciale, poiché la lingua dei Padri della Chiesa combinava la naturale eleganza delle antiche forme di espressione con l'umiltà adatta a un vero cristiano ».

³⁰ AGRIPPA, *De triplici ratione*, p. 164: « Tunc freti sophistica sua insolentia, omnia se posse attentare, aggredi, dissolvere et interpretari putant ».

³¹ Ibid., p. 164: « Tunc irruentes suis ineptiis, inquinamentis et blacteramentis rixosisque disputationibus, ad quod artificium iam linguas armatas habent, omnia quae in fide et religione simplicia, sincera et pura sunt [REUCHLIN, *Verb. Mir.* III, fol. g5v], multiplicia, caliginosa et sordida reddiderunt omnemque theologiam suis absurdis altercationibus ac futili verbositate confuderunt, conturbarunt, polluerunt inveneruntque non divinam nec humanam quidem, sed nescio quam suam, non dico theologiam, sed squalidam, odiosam, cavillatoriam et diabolicam vanitatem, humanarum opinionum philosophicarumque nugarum rhapsodiam [REUCHLIN, *Verb. mir.* II, fol. d1r] ».

³² Ancora molti anni più tardi, nella sferzante *Apologia* scritta contro le violente censure pronunciate dei teologi di Lovanio e della Sorbona, a fronte dello scandalo suscitato dalla pubblicazione *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum* nel 1530, Agrippa fornirà un ritratto eloquentemente mordace dei suoi oppositori: cf. Id., *Apologia aduersus calumnias*, cap. 7, fol. D2r: « An soli magistri nostri et Scholastici sophistae homines sunt et spirituales, caeteri omnes stipites sunt, aut fungi, aut asini, quicunque non sapiunt quod ipsi sapiunt? Paulus vocat animales homines [I Cor., 2, 14], qui ducuntur humanis affectibus, unde Iacobus appellat animalem sapientiam [Iac., 3, 15], quae tumet humanarum rationum et syllogismorum fiducia,

scienza ingannatrice che essi professano, alimentandosi della contesa e della prepotenza di una ragione indomita, ossia non sottoposta al vaglio dell'umiltà e della pietà, rende il loro intelletto superbo e aggressivo, proteso ad avvelenare l'anima nella polemica religiosa: « Difatti per l'anima non c'è peste maggiore che il ragionamento, la discussione, la contesa sul divino, perché annientano la ragione, corrompono l'intelletto, uccidono la fede ».³³ Per questa via si estingue durevolmente la purezza di una devozione vissuta, nella preghiera, nei digiuni, nella predicazione, vale a dire nel culto che dovrebbe animare l'assiduo contatto con la Parola di Dio. Come potranno mai costoro afferrare la verità di Cristo, edificare nella fede la comunità dei fedeli, amministrare con giustizia la Chiesa universale, o persino operare miracoli sull'esempio degli Apostoli e dei Profeti, se difettano a tal punto dello spirito divino?³⁴ In quanto tali, questi falsi sapienti, cui è affidato un compito delicatissimo per il consorzio civile, esprimono l'archetipo di un'umanità indifferente, ostile alla religione, dimentica di Dio.³⁵

carens Spiritu Dei, quales sunt qui pro suo affectu citant et torquent, et interpretantur et applicant Scripturas ex humanis ratiunculis et philosophia Gentium, quaerentes quae suae sunt, non quae sunt Dei. Non omnes ergo Magistri nostri, non omnes caputiati et cucullati spirituales sunt, si vitiorum quorumlibet genere foedati, superba hypocrisi, insatiabili avaritia, impudenti calumnia, odio, ira, invidia et tecta cuculla luxuria, postergata imitatione Christi, affectiones sequuntur animales, quantacunque licet contentiosa loquacitate praediti sint et humanarum scientiarum opinionibus inflati, sed qui ad Sacras Scripturas, etiam vitae, morum ac fidei rationes commodant ».

³³ Id., *De triplici ratione*, p. 160: « Nulla enim maior pestis animae quam ratiocinatio, quam altercatio, quam disputatio de divinis, quae evertit rationem, pervertit intellectum, deiicit fidem »; cf. Id., *Dehortatio gentilis theologiae*, fol. 12r: « Curiosas autem de Deo divinisque inquisitiones quaestionumque altercationes et disputationum pugnas, iuxta Apostoli praeceptum [Tit., 3, 9; 2 Tim., 2, 23–26], omnino vitare ».

³⁴ Sulla scia della critica di Reuchlin alla teologia contemporanea, anche Agrippa certifica nell'incapacità dei sacerdoti e dei prelati di operare miracoli la separazione materiale e spirituale della Chiesa attuale dallo Spirito di Cristo; cf. NAUERT, *Agrippa and the Crisis*, p. 48–49: « Agrippa's belief that the truly illuminated soul could perform works of magic which seemed miraculous even led him into an attack on the corruption of the church in his own day. The early church, he argued, had been aided by the miraculous works of the apostles and of their immediate successors, who were able to perform these miracles precisely because they did possess the pure and spiritual knowledge of the revelation contained in the Bible. Properly, Agrippa felt, the prelates of the church ought always to be gifted with such wonder-working powers based on true knowledge. If present-day theologians and prelates were unable to perform any such miracles (and they were unable), that inability was merely further proof of their corruption and lack of faith. Their error was that they founded their knowledge on reason instead of on faith. They were adulterating the Word of God with their own attempts to bend it to the demands of human reason ».

³⁵ È quanto Agrippa ribadisce a più riprese anche altrove; cf. ad esempio *Defensio propositionum*, fol. G5v: « Sed quod est istud novum hominum, ne dicam haeticorum, genus, qui, ut inquit Paulus, non propter bonam voluntatem, sed propter contentionem Christum praedicant; qui evacuantes crucem Christi, sacratissimam theologiam, quae nullam sub artem cadere potest, persuasibilibus humanae sapientiae verbis ac logicis regulis astringunt; qui ea, quae nisi sola

III

A partire da una diagnosi così articolata, ripensare l'approccio al testo sacro, depositario dell'unica sapienza salvifica, ricercando con strumenti critici la purezza del significato originario, esprime in Agrippa la volontà di ridefinire il concetto di teologia.³⁶ La teologia, in quanto indagine sul significato della Parola, dovrà abbandonare i sofismi e le controversie dialettiche, dovrà rigettare i metodi in uso nelle aule universitarie, per tradursi in una meditazione profonda e responsabile sul messaggio cristiano.³⁷ Ricercare il senso autentico, non adulterato o travisato, delle Scritture significherà allora disciplinare l'attività della ragione, confortarla con il sostegno della fede e della Grazia elargite da Cristo, affinché l'anima dell'uomo si elevi, nel silenzio delle apparenze sensibili, a contemplare le verità della mente e i misteri divini in cui è descritto il sentiero di salvezza. Solo in questo modo l'esercizio della teologia diviene per il sapiente rinascita spirituale nella contemplazione di Dio, addestramento ad un esercizio corretto della facoltà razionale, catarsi morale dell'intera persona.³⁸

fide creduntur, suis syllogismis sese invenire ac demonstrare posse praesumunt; qui monstrosos casus excogitantes, novasque chimeras quotidie adinvenientes, Deo et omni creaturae illudunt ».

³⁶ PERRONE COMPAGNI, *Della vanità delle scienze*, p. 130: « Nel condurre la sua guerra contro i 'temerari giganti et inimici delle sacre Lettere', Agrippa persegue anche un obiettivo di riforma gnoseologica e morale; ma ha in mente qualcosa di molto più ampio, un programma religioso e concretamente politico. La filosofia si fa progetto di rinnovamento spirituale e istituzionale, auspicando una revisione radicale non solo delle forme esteriori della religione e dei modi del suo insegnamento, bensì dello stesso concetto di teologia, cioè dello stesso fondamento su cui si basa l'ordine gerarchico e sacramentale della Chiesa. Si tratta di una contrapposizione che è ideologica prima ancora che dottrinale, di una lotta per l'egemonia culturale prima ancora che di un confronto tra ortodossia ed eterodossia. Agrippa non conduce una guerra 'ideale', di scuola, contro il passato e la tradizione; combatte invece un duello reale e personale contro la corruzione del presente, contro i filosofi, i teologi, i religiosi del proprio tempo ».

³⁷ NAUERT, *Agrippa and the Crisis*, p. 50: « Like the other humanists, he [scil. Agrippa] upheld the ideal of a return to the pure, undefiled faith of the early church, in opposition to the contentious wrangling of scholastic theology. To the proud rationalism of the professional theologians, Agrippa and his friends contrasted the firm and humble faith of the true believer, who praises God for illuminating man by grace, and who prepares himself for enlightenment with vigils, fasts and a life lived in imitation of Christ. Only to such persons, Agrippa felt, will God grant knowledge which is beyond the reach of human investigation, the knowledge of the true mysteries of religion, which are contained not in the external revelation, but in its inner meaning ».

³⁸ PERRONE COMPAGNI, *Della vanità delle scienze*, p. 131: « Attraverso una critica moralistica della corruzione delle persone che praticano la scienza, Agrippa pone sotto accusa l'inadeguatezza delle strutture a cui è affidata la direzione delle coscienze; ma ne mette anche in discussione la preminenza (la teologia è affare di tutti) e financo la competenza, perché il vero teologo è colui che è guidato dallo Spirito, colui che pratica il suo cristianesimo come un esercizio di

Ogni tensione d'amore per la sapienza viene dallo Spirito santo mediante il nostro signore Gesù Cristo. La vera sapienza è conoscenza di Dio, illuminazione della mente, riforma della volontà e desiderio di una ragione retta, quasi una salda legge di vita, che rende santa l'anima dell'uomo, adegua la sua esistenza a Dio, gli indica cosa egli debba fare e cosa rifuggire: con termine diverso noi chiamiamo questa sapienza 'teologia'. Tale sapienza e vera conoscenza di Dio – anzi, tale sorta di contatto essenziale con Dio, più eccellente della conoscenza – è divinamente trasmessa nel Vangelo. Infatti né Dio può essere veramente conosciuto senza il Vangelo, né il Vangelo può essere veramente compreso senza la grazia divina. È senza dubbio evidente che gli insegnamenti di Dio non possono essere penetrati se non mediante Dio, come dice il Profeta: 'Nella tua luce vedremo la luce'. Mercurio Trismegisto chiama questa luce 'mente della essenza divina', luce stessa che scaturisce da Dio.³⁹

La professione teologica coincide con la scelta di abbracciare un percorso di perfezionamento umano radicato nell'esegesi scritturistica, fondato sulla dottrina del Vangelo e realizzabile grazie all'apprendimento della 'luce di Dio', cioè della vera sapienza. Accogliere gli insegnamenti divini significa tradurre in prassi concreta l'esperienza religiosa, orientando attivamente la vita individuale all'insegna dell'obbedienza alla Legge, secondo la quale al cristiano è prescritto di amare Dio e di amare il prossimo, ossia di custodire la devozione e di praticare la giustizia. Questo insegnamento è tramandato unanimemente nelle parole di Cristo e in quelle di Ermete Trismegisto:

Ma invano conosciamo Dio, se non lo onoriamo convenientemente e se non viviamo con gli uomini secondo la legge. Dice pertanto Ermete: 'La sfida della devozione religiosa consiste nel riconoscere Dio e nel non recare offesa a nessuno'. È lo stesso precetto che ha dato Cristo, quando dice: 'Ama il signore Dio tuo e il

perfezionamento e di santificazione, attraverso il superamento di sé stesso, dominando le apparenze e disprezzando i valori mondani : il vero teologo è il rigenerato in Cristo ».

³⁹ AGRIPPA, *De triplici ratione*, p. 134: « Omne studium amorque sapientiae ex Spiritu sancto est per dominum nostrum Iesum Christum. Ipsa vera sapientia Dei cognitio est, illustratio mentis, voluntatis correctio appetitioque rectae rationis, quaedam vitae certa lex, sanctificans animam hominis, Deo disponens vitam, quid agendum, quid omittendum demonstrans; quam nos sapientiam alio vocabulo theologiam vocamus. Haec sapientia veraque Dei cognitio, imo contactus quidam Dei essentialis, melior quam cognitio, traditur divinitus in Evangelio. Neque enim Deus ipse sine Evangelio vere cognoscitur, neque c Evangelium absque divina gratia vere intelligitur. Manifestum enim est ea, quae ex Deo tradita sunt, non nisi ex Deo intelligi posse, sicut ait Propheta: 'In lumine tuo videbimus lumen' [Ps. 35 (36), 10]. Quam lucem Trismegistus Mercurius mentem vocat divinae essentiae, lucem ipsam exorientem Deo »; cf. *Mercurii Trismegisti Pimander. Liber de sapientia et potestate Dei*, I, in *Contenta in hoc volumine*, fol. 4rv: « Sum, inquit ille, Pimander, mens divinae potentiae [...] Lumen illud ego sum, mens deus tuus [...] Mentis vero germen lucens Dei filium [Corpus Hermeticum. Asclepius, ed. ARTHUR D. NOCK, ANDRÉ M. J. FESTUGIÈRE, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1945, vol. I, p. 7–8] ».

prossimo tuo come te stesso'. Questi due comandamenti sono necessari alla salvezza e sono la scaturigine di ogni bene: il primo è fonte di devozione, il secondo di giustizia.⁴⁰

Il vero teologo, dunque, in quanto degno interprete delle Scritture, sarà esempio costante di carità verso il prossimo, non esposizione della superbia umana; sarà modello vivente di integrità morale, non esemplare di avida insolenza e litigiosa ambizione; secondo la lezione trasmessa dai Profeti e dagli Apostoli, egli sarà custode appassionato e diligente di una fede saldissima in Dio.

Riformare la teologia richiede necessariamente una trasformazione dell'impianto metodologico, ossia dei fondamenti del discorso ermeneutico. Il progetto di Agrippa muove dalla volontà di sostituire all'esegesi scolastica un nuovo metodo di approccio alle Scritture, individuato recuperando da un lato la più recente filologia biblica, di cui Erasmo e Lefèvre d'Étaples avevano offerto testimonianza esemplare, e dall'altro il modello sapienziale di Reuchlin, ossia un'esperienza religiosa che, tramite l'esegesi della Parola di Dio, rigeneri l'uomo per renderlo operatore di miracoli.⁴¹ Così concepito, l'approccio umanistico di Agrippa si richiama ad alcuni parametri fondamentali che, sebbene parzialmente enunciati nel periodo italiano, saranno sviluppati e collaudati successivamente nelle opere della maturità.

In primo luogo, a scapito dei *rencetiores scriptores*, ossia della tradizione scolastica medievale, che con le sue polemiche e faziosità ha stravolto alla radice il prezioso insegnamento dei suoi più illustri iniziatori, come Tommaso d'Aquino e Alberto Magno – i quali, d'altronde, si servivano delle dottrine dei Peripatetici per combattere le eresie nella Chiesa, non per alimentare la propria vanagloria – Agrippa sottolinea il valore della teologia dei Padri – Dionigi, Lattanzio, Origene, Girolamo, Eusebio, Agostino, per ricordarne alcuni – a cui attribuisce indiscussa preminenza:

⁴⁰ AGRIPPA, *De triplici ratione*, p. 116–118: « Sed frustra cognoscimus Deum, nisi illum rite colamus et legitime cum hominibus vivamus. Unde inquit Hermes: 'Certamen religiosae pietatis est recognoscere Deum, iniuriam inferre nemini' [*Corpus Hermeticum. Pimander*, X, fol. 23v (*Nock-Festugière*, 1, p. 122)]. Quod etiam praecipit Christus, dicens: 'Dilige dominum Deum tuum et proximum tuum sicut te ipsum' [Mt. 22, 37–39; Mc. 12, 30–31; Lc. 10, 27]. Haec duo praecepta ad salutem necessaria sunt suntque fons omnis boni: horum primum pietatis, alterum iustitiae est ».

⁴¹ PERRONE COMPAGNI, *Ermetismo e Cristianesimo*, p. 16, n. 27: « Anche Reuchlin aveva avvertito la necessità di un sapere che si facesse azione, *ars miraculorum*; ma, a fronte degli esiti fallimentari della magia tradizionale, il *De Verbo mirifico* proponeva come alternativa più efficace e sicura la magia cabalistico-cristiana fondata sull'uso del nome di Gesù, *verbum mirificum*, che sancisce l'unione mistica e concretamente si traduce in una fonte di attività sovrumane operate da Dio attraverso l'uomo rigenerato e 'deificato'. La pratica reuchliniana era dunque conseguenza di una esperienza esclusivamente religiosa e poteva essere definita magica solo per analogia ».

Nelle loro opere è così isolata, così rara la citazione di testi scritti, laddove ci sia qualcosa degno di essere menzionato; e quando c'è, essa proviene dal Vecchio Testamento, dai Vangeli, dagli Apostoli, da autori più antichi. Sono uomini che non si pavoneggiano, che senza dubbio contano nella sola grazia divina, consapevoli del loro sapere, ottimi maestri, non timorosi del giudizio altrui, veritieri, 'capaci di non guardare in faccia gli uomini'. Costoro ci hanno elargito doni tratti dal loro tesoro, imitando Cristo, che 'come il buon padre di famiglia ha tratto fuori dal suo tesoro beni nuovi e vecchi'; e in ogni cosa con parole e opere hanno prodotto negli uomini il frutto della vera religione e della fede per la salvezza eterna.⁴²

Nella riflessione sulle prerogative della verità storica, tale attestazione di autorevolezza assegna agli scrittori più antichi un ruolo privilegiato. A parere di Agrippa essi devono la loro affidabilità ai criteri impiegati per documentare gli eventi narrati. In alcuni casi, avendo partecipato ai fatti in prima persona, gli *antiquiores* hanno reso sé stessi garanti della veridicità; in altri la prossimità temporale agli eventi descritti ha sottratto incertezza e difficoltà al loro compito; in altri ancora, la credibilità della narrazione è stata irrobustita dal ricorso a fonti accreditate, indispensabili per riferire con accuratezza di eventi lontani nel tempo.⁴³ Particolare importanza, tra i criteri di validazione metodologica, è assegnata da Agrippa ai *publici notarii*, considerati fonti preziosissime per la conoscenza storica. Si tratta in altre parole di sacerdoti che svolgevano la funzione di notai, segretari o archivisti, deputati alla redazione di cronografie, alla compilazione di annali, alla registrazione della storia ecclesiastica presso biblioteche o archivi pubblici.⁴⁴ Tale attività recuperava in ambito cristiano la

⁴² AGRIPPA, *De triplici ratione*, p. 170–172: « In quorum [scil. prisci theologi] scriptis tam simplex, tam rara invenitur scripturarum citatio, ubicunque aliquid memorandum est, et illa quidem ex Veteri Testamento, ex Evangeliiis, ex Apostolis, ex remotiore antiquitate – nihil se iactantes, homines sane in divina gratia solum confidentes, suae sapientiae conscii, doctores optimi, nullorum iudicium timentes, veraces, 'non respicientes in faciem hominum' [Mt. 22, 16]. Qui ex suis thesauris nobis largiti sunt munera, imitantes Christum, qui 'tanquam bonus paterfamilias de thesauris suis protulit nova et vetera' [Mt. 13, 52], in omnibus verbo et opere fructificantes in hominibus fructum verae religionis et fidei ad salutem aeternam ».

⁴³ Di quest'ultimo criterio è esemplare per Agrippa il caso di Eusebio di Cesarea; cf. AGRIPPA, *Defensio prepositionum*, fol. D6r: « Quare in primos fontes, ad vetustissimos scriptores, penes quos est inviolata veritatis fides, semper recurrendum est. Inter quos est Eusebius unus omnium praecipuus, qui omnem historiam suam, ut ipse fatetur, ex Clementi Alexandrino, ex Egesippo, ex Irenaeo, ex Theophilo et aliis plerisque publicis et Apostolorum proximis scriptoribus desumpsit. Ideoque sine controversia in ecclesiastica historia ab omnibus recipitur ».

⁴⁴ VAN DER POEL, *Cornelius Agrippa*, p. 89–90: « To illustrate this, Agrippa refers to a Biblical episode: after the Jewish people returned from the exile in Babylon, the controversy concerning the building of the temple was solved as a result of the utilization of the official records of the Persians (Ezra 5–6). Therefore, those authors are the most trustworthy who had such an official function and either personally registered the events or copied them from a primary source. This principle of the trustworthiness of the oldest source available, Agrippa continues, has been held valid throughout the ages, and for this reason the early popes ensured the official

professione più antica del cancelliere, un segretario incaricato di redigere gli atti di un tribunale per conto dello Stato, oppure, in altri casi, quella dello storiografo di corte – ruolo che lo stesso Agrippa avrebbe rivestito ad Anversa diventando *indiciarius* e *historiographus* per conto di Margherita d'Austria nel 1529 –⁴⁵ ossia uno scrittore di pregio, a cui è demandato il compito di coltivare e trasmettere in nome delle autorità la memoria delle opere compiute dai sovrani. A questo proposito, nel 1534, consegnando all'editore la versione rielaborata della *Defensio* che accompagnava le *De beatissimae Annae monogamia, ac unico puerperio propositiones*, un opuscolo teologico risalente al 1519 – dedicato alla controversa questione del *trinubium* di Sant'Anna – in cui aveva difeso pubblicamente Lefèvre d'Étaples dalle accuse di eresia mosse da Claudio Salini, inquisitore domenicano,⁴⁶ Agrippa avrebbe precisato il suo approccio storiografico:

Per quanto riguarda la verità storica dobbiamo credere indubbiamente agli autori che furono presenti, memori o prossimi ai tempi delle cose narrate, ai luoghi, alle azioni, alle persone, o che attinsero le loro storie a scrittori più antichi di comprovata fede. Infatti, poiché un tempo i sacerdoti erano pubblici notai, incaricati di registrare le storie, le origini, gli annali e i tempi, i loro scritti venivano conservati con valore giuridico negli archivi e nelle biblioteche. [...] Perciò è necessario riporre la massima fiducia negli autori che furono presenti agli eventi in qualità di pubblici notai, o che registrarono con valore giuridico gli eventi attingendo a notai più antichi. Come oggi si definisce pubblico e convalidato un documento che sia stato trasmesso in buona fede da un notaio precedente ad

recording of church history. To exemplify this, Agrippa mentions that Pope Fabian (d. 250) appointed seven 'collaterals' (later to be called cardinals) who were each in charge of a notary whose duty it was to record the deeds of the martyrs. He also mentions that Popes Marcellus and Sylvester I saw to the recording of historical events ».

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 41.

⁴⁶ Sulla disputa cf. NAUERT, *Agrippa and the Crisis*, p. 61: « To the old legend of St. Anne, who was said to be the mother of the Virgin Mary, medieval tradition had added embellishments, among them the belief that after bearing the Virgin and after the death of her first husband, Joachim, she had married twice more, once to Cleophas and one to Salome, by each of whom she had a daughter. All three daughters; and they married Joseph, Alpheus, and Zebedee, bearing, respectively, Jesus Christ; St. James, the Less, Joseph the Just, Simon, and Jude; and James the Greater and the Apostle John. The attack on this belief came first of all from the greatest figure among French humanists, the linguist, theologian, and philosopher Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples. Agrippa became involved in this controversy only because he had defended Lefèvre's views in discussion at Metz, [...], and then, [...] had been publicly denounced from the pulpit as a rank heretic. In response to this accusation, Agrippa drew up a brief treatise based on Lefèvre's discussion of the question, *The tribus et una*. His foes, in turn, composed articles of refutation, to each Agrippa wrote a point-by-point rebuttal. His chief adversaries were Dominicus Delphinus of the observant Franciscan, Nicolaus Orici of the Minorites, and, above all, Claudius Salini, prior of the Dominican friary at Metz and a recent doctor of Paris. All three, be it noted, were members of the regular clergy, wick had already taken up the defense of tradition against the humanists in the notorious Reuchlin controversy earlier in the same decade ».

un notaio seguente, allo stesso modo anticamente venivano sempre conservati in questa maniera i documenti nelle monarchie dei Persi, dei Medi, degli Assiri, dei Greci e dei Romani. E nella chiesa delle origini, gli Apostoli e i loro successori incaricavano sempre alcuni notai, di autorità pubblica, di redigere con valore giuridico la storia della chiesa e del Vangelo.⁴⁷

D'altro canto è più che necessario respingere le scelte dei moderni teologi, i quali, nella maggior parte dei casi, pretendono di fondare la certezza dei fatti sulle loro convinzioni, disprezzando così le opinioni degli antichi, oppure si ostinano a riportare errori, falsità, inganni pubblicamente accertati.⁴⁸ Qualora si decida di attingere comunque alle loro esposizioni, occorrerà verificare che quanto affermato presupponga un metodo rigoroso e una solida preparazione. Nei termini di Agrippa, gli *iuniores scriptores*, qualora rivendichino l'autorità dottrinale in campo storico-religioso, dovranno dimostrare da un lato una fede incrollabile in Dio, costantemente alimentata nelle parole e nelle azioni, dall'altro il possesso di un'autentica erudizione, che prevede necessariamente uno studio assiduo delle fonti storiche più antiche, nonché la conoscenza delle lingue, delle istituzioni, dei riti, delle tradizioni che animano il panorama culturale delle Scritture. La preparazione teologica richiede persino lo studio della natura, nell'ottica di comprendere adeguatamente i fenomeni fisici descritti in molti luoghi della Bibbia. Una formazione solida e organica costituisce il presupposto necessario per distinguere i veri interpreti della Parola, che operano

⁴⁷ AGRIPPA, *Defensio propositionum*, fol. D5r-v: « De his quae ad historicam veritatem pertinent illis autoribus absque repugnantia credendum est, qui narratorum temporibus, locis gestis, personis fuerunt praesentes, aut vicini, seu memores, vel historiam suam ex antiquioribus probata fide exceperunt. Cum itaque olim sacerdotes essent publici notarii rerum gestarum, originum, annalium et temporum, quorum scripta publica fide in bibliothecis et archivis servabantur. [...] Ideo his maxima fides habenda est, qui fuerunt rerum gestarum praesentes publici notarii, vel qui ex antiquioribus notariis haec publica fide exceperunt. Sicut et hodie publicum et probatum dicitur instrumentum, quod a notario per alium posteriorem notarium bona fide traducitur, ita semper ab antiquo in monarchiis Persarum, Medorum, Assyriorum, Graecorum et Romanorum, praecipue servatum est. Et in prima ecclesia, ab ipsis Apostolis, eorumque successoribus, semper aliqui publicae autoritatis notarii deputati sunt, qui publica fide Evangelii ecclesiaeque texerent historiam »; cf. VAN DER POEL, *Cornelius Agrippa*, p. 89-90.

⁴⁸ AGRIPPA, *Defensio propositionum*, fol. D6v-D7r: « Contra nunc iunioribus scriptoribus, quibus haec sunt adventicia, nova et a vetustate nimis remota, in quibus non perseverant priscae literae et scribendi mores, ritus, studia, leges, nisi veterum inviolata testimonia, validissimae rationes, bona fide prodixerunt, illorum fidei non satis tuto acceditur et dicta illorum invalida sunt, ut a quibus neque argumentum, neque autoritatis ullum suffragium sumi possit. Similiter qui non secuti doctrinam maiorum, solo auditu, vel popolare errores et nullo certo autore apocriphas vel privatas opiniones scribunt, nullo modo sunt recipiendi nisi ubi a publica fide non dissentiant. Qui vero adeo indociles sunt, quod antiquioribus de antiquitate credere nolunt, sed, contra antiquorum traditiones, de rebus gestis ac historiis altercando, quae sibi videntur placere utcumque pertinaciter defendunt, hii eadem facilitate contemnendi sunt quae contendunt »; cf. VAN DER POEL, *Cornelius Agrippa*, p. 90-91.

onestamente per avvicinare gli uomini alla dottrina di Cristo, dai cattivi predicatori, i quali, muovendo dalle loro illusioni, menzogne o insidie intrappolano nella gabbia dell'ignoranza o vincolano con la zavorra delle opinioni correnti la comunità inerme dei fedeli.⁴⁹ Di tale preparazione enciclopedica, questa la diagnosi di Agrippa, i più recenti scrittori, principalmente maestri della disputa e del sillogismo, difettano alla radice.⁵⁰

In secondo luogo, la distinzione tra *cortex* et *medulla*, ossia tra una considerazione superficiale che si affida, come nel caso dei *'Magistri nostri'*, alle armi della logica per sciogliere le ambiguità testuali, e un approfondimento spirituale che, erede della distinzione medievale tra un approccio allegorico, morale o anagogico, invoca il soccorso della fede per oltrepassare il dettato scritturistico, rimanda inevitabilmente alla difficoltà strutturale, connessa ai

⁴⁹ AGRIPPA, *Defensio propositionum*, fol. E2v-E3v: « Nam qui vetustarum literarum sacrarumque linguarum sunt ignari, illas opiniones sequuntur, quae in publicum usum quovis modo irresperunt, quos cum alii innumeri eiusdem farinae homines sequuti sunt et quotidie misere sequuntur. [...] Ad quod tibi facile respondeo permultum interesse inter ecclesiae auctoritatem aliquid certa definitione determinantem, multumque interest inter veteres historiarum sanctos scriptores aliquid suorum vel vicinorum temporum narrantes, et inter recentiores scholasticos doctores aliquid suo cerebro opinantes, frigidissimisque coniecturis contententes. [...] O quanta canuntur et leguntur in ecclesiae officiolis, quae omnino sunt varia, ficta et falsa, ut locustas ex ovibus, saxeum pastorem, ovem in praedonis ventre balantem, redivivum ex mortuis asinum, et alia innumera, ut vix sit ulla martyris aut virginis legenda, cui non pie aliquid admentitum sit, vel vaftris pessimisque nebulonibus, vel a quaestuariis fraterculis, quibus studium est, ex incauta simplicium affectionem lucrum capere, quotiens ab huiusmodi, aut anus quaedam delyra lachrimatur, aut alius quispiam pavidus inhorresca. At nunquid haec omnia approbavit ecclesia? Non certe. Quamborem quas vetustissimi sacri scriptores, divinitus corroborati, nobis commendant historias, eis indubitata fides habenda est. Iuniorum vero contraria commenta, non nisi caute et cum iudicio ecclesiae recipienda sunt ».

⁵⁰ Ibid., fol. D4v-D5r: « Nihil enim de antiquitatum historiis probant recentiores et ab illarum temporibus remotissimi doctores. Itaque facile contemno ac refello quos tu tam magnis mitris producis, Hugonem cardinalem, Anthonium archiepiscopum, Petrum de Natalibus episcopum, insuper et Petrum Comestorem et doctorem Angelicum, quibus, scio, et alios innumeros addere posses, si omnes neotericorum contionatorculorum sordidos commentarios, sermones, summulas, collectanea, reportata et dictionarios recensueris. Mirorque non modicum quod vastum illum coacervatorem Vincentium cum suo *Speculo* et illum chronicarum supplementatorem, illosque vocabulorum latrunculos Mammatrectum, Graecistam, Catholiconem in hunc exercitum tuum non vocaveris »; cf. Ibid., fol. D7r: « Ex horum numero sunt plerique iuniores, historiarum et linguarum ignari, quorum commentaria super Bibliam cum legimus, ipsa Sacra Scriptura illorum futilibus questiunculis ac impiis litigiis, tam dubia et incerta redditur, ut illorum commentis etiam ipsa [...] Christi genealogia irrisioni pateat Iudaeis. Cuiusmodi insolentes sophistae, cum ipsi regiones et loca, quae divinae literae commemorant ex cosmographia non didicerunt, gentium ritum, origines, instituta et cultum ex historiarum scriptoribus non cognoscunt, rerum autem naturalium, quarum maxima copia in Prophetis atque hinc inde in Sacris Literis mentio est et ex quarum proprietate saepe mysterii intellectus dependet, cognitione penitus careant, sola dialectica freti se satis eruditos putant, si de quavis re syllogismum in Barbara aut Baroco connectere sciant ».

limiti della natura umana, che incontra l'esegeta nel processo di decodificazione del simbolo e illustrazione del senso figurato. A parere di Agrippa l'interprete meticoloso eviterà accuratamente di costringere la Parola di Dio al significato apparente, ossia all'involucro del messaggio rivelato, poiché altrimenti numerosi episodi della narrazione biblica risulterebbero nient'altro che storielle inconsistenti, contraddittorie, persino favolose, per non dire ridicole.⁵¹ Le oscurità evidenti che spesso incontriamo nella lettura della Bibbia saranno affrontate ricorrendo alla collazione testuale, ossia chiarendo un passo oscuro del testo per mezzo di un passo analogo, affine o contestuale, che sia più perspicuo e intelligibile, sulla base al presupposto erasmiano per cui la Scrittura illustra, spiega e chiarifica sé stessa, allorché ci affidiamo al significato mistico del suo contenuto: « optima ratio est interpretandi divinas litteras, si locum obscurum ex aliorum locorum collatione reddamus illustrem et mysticam scripturam mystica item scriptura exponat ».⁵²

Qualora la comprensione risulti pur sempre ostacolata e l'ambiguità testuale comunque invalicabile, l'esegeta ricorrerà alla tradizione, specialmente ai teologi più antichi e autorevoli che di quelle oscurità hanno saputo rintracciare un senso plausibile, in linea con un'interpretazione spirituale.⁵³ Nella summenzionata

⁵¹ AGRIPPA, *De triplici ratione*, p. 130–132: « Quod si solum literalem sensum legis apprehendas absque spiritu futurae lucis, veritatis et perfectionis, nihil erit lege magis ridiculum et anili fabulae milesiique sermonis magis simillimum ».

⁵² ERASMUS ROTERODAMUS, *Ratio seu Methodus compendio perveniendi ad veram Theologiam*, in ID., *Ausgewählte Schriften*, vol. III, ed. GERHARD B. WINKLER, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1967, p. 454; cf. anche cf. ibid., p. 178: « Denique series ipsa narrationis altius repetita, sententiam aperit alias obscura. Saepenumero locorum collatio nodum explicat difficultatis, dum quod alibi dictum est rectius, alibi dilucidius refertur »; sull'importanza della *collatio* nel metodo esegetico di Erasmo, cf. NIKOLAUS STAUBACH, « *Memores pristinae perfectionis*. The importance of the Church Fathers for *Devotio moderna* », in IRENA BACKUS (ed.), *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West. From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, vol. I, Brill, Leiden – New York – Köln 1997, p. 441–460. Per Agrippa cf. VAN DER POEL, *Cornelius Agrippa*, p. 92: « Agrippa had a particular interest on the one hand in those authors (mainly Church Fathers) who have enquired into the profound meaning of the Scripture or who have explained the basic principles of Christian belief on the basis of the Bible, and on the other hand in authors and writings that have a mystical inclination ».

⁵³ Si tratta, anche in questo caso, di un presupposto metodologico che si ispira ad Erasmo: cf. ERASMUS, *Enchiridion militis Christiani*, in ID., *Ausgewählte Schriften*, vol. I, ed. WERNER WELZIG, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1968, p. 88: « Ex interpretibus divinae scripturae eos potissimum delige, qui a littera quamaxime recedunt. Cuiusmodi sunt in primis post Paulum Origenes, Ambrosius, Hieronymus, Augustinus. Video enim neotericos theologos litterae nimium libenter inhaerere et captiosis quibusdam argutiis magis quam eruendus mysteriis operam dare, quasi vero non vere dixerit Paulus legem nostram spiritualem esse »; cf. VAN DER POEL, *Cornelius Agrippa*, p. 264: « The true meaning of the Bible should be looked for by means of careful study of the text itself, and by means of careful evaluation of the exegetical work of those theologians who have studied the Bible in good faith and in accordance with Agrippa's epistemological principles. For Agrippa, this includes, besides the writings of a large

Defensio, contestando sul piano metodologico la prassi esegetica e gli strumenti didattici dell'inquisitore domenicano, Agrippa affermerà:

Impara a comprendere i significati nascosti della Scrittura non dalle *summulae*, dalle *cantiones*, dalle *postillae*, dai dizionari e dalle orribili raccolte di questo genere in uso nelle scuole, o da alcuni autori di poco valore del passato, bensì dalla Scrittura stessa, che spiega se stessa ogni volta che il raffronto con altri passi chiarifica un luogo oscuro, nonché dai commentari degli antichi scrittori e dagli antichissimi interpreti che più da vicino si abbeverarono alle fonti. Dopo esserti allontanato dalle tue pozze fangose, devi abbeverarti alla loro purissima acqua per imparare a discernere il significato delle Scritture, a meno che il tuo palato e la tua lingua non siano a tal punto corrotti dalla bile, che l'educazione letteraria non abbia per te il suo vero sapore, bensì quello che un organo infetto porta con sé.⁵⁴

Il programma ermeneutico di Agrippa richiama l'inviolabilità della Parola, che il vero teologo reputerà teoricamente inattaccabile, ossia non manipolabile secondo le pratiche esiziali, fomite di eresia e discordia nella Chiesa, promosse dai dottori scolastici. In altri termini, se da un lato si richiede al teologo di accostarsi alla religione con una mente libera da opinioni errate, dall'altro non occorre affatto che l'interprete aggiunga alla Scrittura alcuna dottrina che la Scrittura non proclami effettivamente. Egli non dimenticherà che i misteri divini sono stati insegnati solo da Cristo, non certo anche da Aristotele, e che sono stati rivelati per il tramite dello Spirito divino, non dedotti dalla sola ragione: « Ego illud intendo – scriverà ancora Agrippa nella sua *Apologia* – ad divinorum cognitionem non esse opus argutiis philosophorum, neque syllogismis dialecticorum, sed oportet illam haurire ex Scriptura divina, quae est regula infallibilis, semper permanes in suo vigore nativo ».⁵⁵

L'inviolabilità delle Scritture evidenzia certamente l'autosufficienza del messaggio evangelico contro ogni contaminazione dall'esterno, ma non sottrae comunque il contenuto religioso al vaglio della critica storico-filologica, ossia al contributo della comprensione razionale. Ciò significa che l'uomo, a cui è

number of canonical writers (that is, the Church Fathers and certain medieval theologians), those writers belonging to the *prisca theologia* and the Hermetic tradition. Agrippa follows this method of research and observes these doctrinal restrictions in all his theological writings ».

⁵⁴ AGRIPPA, *Defensio propositionum*, fol. E6r-v: « Disce Scripturae absconditos sensus intelligere non e scholasticis summulis, cantionibus, postillis, dictionariis et ex huius generis luridis collectaneis, aut e sordidis quibusdam et pridie natis auctoribus, sed ex seipsa semetipsam declarante, ubi locum obscurum aliorum collatio elucidat, tum ex veterum commentariis et priscis illis interpretibus qui proxime biberunt de fontibus. Horum purissima aqua, tuis faeculentis lacunis obmissis, tibi bibenda est, ut scias discernere sensus Scripturarum, nisi palatum et linguam tanta bili habeas infecta, ut bonae litterae tibi non sapiant id quod sunt, sed quod vitiatum organum secum circumfert »; cf. VAN DER POEL, *Cornelius Agrippa*, p. 86-87

⁵⁵ ID., *Apologia adversus calumnias*, cap. 33, fol. H3v-H4r.

demandato il compito di tradurre in scelta esistenziale e azione concreta il messaggio di Dio, non si limita ad accogliere pedissequamente il dettato scritturistico, così come non è legittimato a sottometterne il senso alle prescrizioni della logica aristotelica. Al contrario, l'eccellenza della Rivelazione rende al contempo la Parola di Dio inesauribile, vale a dire bisognosa di un assiduo cimento interpretativo da parte dell'uomo. L'inesauribilità del messaggio, che invoca la collaborazione dell'uomo, è il presupposto fondamentale del discorso religioso, in quanto certifica l'origine divina e la validità perpetua della Rivelazione, ma si richiama parimenti alle condizioni storiche della sua trasmissione e del suo compimento nel tempo.⁵⁶ Poiché inesauribile, dunque, la Parola richiede da un lato il contributo unanime delle facoltà umane – *mens* (piano della fede), *ratio* (piano della scienza), *idolum* (piano dell'immaginazione)⁵⁷

⁵⁶ VAN DER POEL, *Cornelius Agrippa*, p. 83–84: « Agrippa considered Biblical exegesis necessary, because for various reasons connected with human imperfection, the Word of God is not always communicated correctly to men. In chapter 99 of *De incertitudine* (On prophets), Agrippa explained this thought in a particularly expressive way by observing that even divinely inspired men such as the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles and evangelists were not infallible, and occasionally failed to see the truth and made involuntary mistakes. As examples of prophets who made errors, Agrippa mentions Moses, who did not keep his promise to lead the people of Israel, Jonas, who failed to anticipate God's change of plan when he proclaimed that Nineveh would be destroyed within forty days (Jonah 3, 4–10), and Peter, who was reprimanded by St. Paul. [...] In the same chapter Agrippa also points out that even the corpus of Holy Books is not without imperfection, since some books are lost, while others have not been accepted as canonical. Some examples of the first category are the Book of the Wars of the Lord, mentioned in Numbers 21, 14, the Book of Jashar, mentioned in Joshua 10, 13, and the numerous apocryphal Biblical texts »; cf. AGRIPPA, *De Incertitudine & Vanitate Scientiarum*, Ioannes Grapheus, Antverpiae 1530, cap. 99, fol. Rr–R2v.

⁵⁷ Sulla tripartizione dell'anima cf. AGRIPPA, *De occulta philosophia*, III, 43, p. 538: « Anima humana constat mente, ratione, et idolo: mens illuminat rationem, ratio fluit in idolum, omnia una sunt anima. Ratio, nisi per mentem illuminetur, ab errore non est immunis; mens autem lumen rationi non praebebat, nisi lucente Deo, primo videlicet lumine. Prima enim lux in Deo est supereminens omnem intellectum, quapropter non potest lux intelligibilis vocari; sed lux illa quando infunditur menti fit intellectualis atque intelligi potest; deinde quando per mentem infunditur rationi fit rationalis ac potest non solum intelligi, sed etiam cogitari; deinde quando per rationem infunditur in idolum animae efficitur non solum cogitabilis, sed etiam imaginabilis, nedum tamen corporea; quando vero exinde migrat in aethereum idoli vehiculum efficitur primum corporea, non tamen manifeste sensibilis, donec transierit in corpus elementale sive simplex aëreumque sive compositum, in quo efficitur lux manifeste visibilis ad oculum ». Il passo si fonda su MARSILIUS FICINUS, *Theologia platonica*, XIII, 4, ed. RAYMOND MARCEL, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1964, vol. II, p. 239: « Prima lux in Deo est atque ibi est talis ut superemineat intellectum, ideoque non potest lux intelligibilis appellari. Sed lux illa Dei, cum infunditur angelo, fit e vestigio lux intellectualis atque intelligi potest. Quando infunditur animae, fit rationalis ac potest non intelligi solum, sed cogitari. Inde migrat in animae idolum, ubi fit sensitiva, nondum tamen corporea. Inde in aethereum vehiculum idoli, ubi fit corporalis, nondum tamen manifeste sensibilis. Denique in corpus elementale, sive simplex aeriumque sive compositum, quod est aetherei vasculum, in quo evadit manifeste visibilis ».

– incaricate di cooperare, assieme alla Grazia divina, alla comprensione dei misteri religiosi; dall'altro il supporto della tradizione teologica più antica, riconosciuta depositaria degli strumenti necessari all'attività ermeneutica, ossia a formare e irrobustire la competenza dell'uomo in campo spirituale.⁵⁸

IV

Il ragionamento che Agrippa sviluppa nelle pagine agguerrite del *De triplici ratione*, richiamate in precedenza, sottolinea il sostrato ideologico che alimenta la sua riflessione teologica. Si tratta di una concezione profondamente etica della funzione che l'uomo di lettere è chiamato a occupare; una persuasione che rimarca l'adesione matura di Agrippa agli ideali umanistici, elaborati in chiave filosofico-teologica durante il periodo italiano. Formulati più sistematicamente nelle opere della maturità, come il *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum* e il *De occulta philosophia*, tali ideali si appellano sia al riconoscimento della dignità umana, delle sue facoltà e delle sue scelte nel percorso di conoscenza del mondo naturale e sovranaturale, sia a una visione della sapienza intesa come riforma delle coscienze, come ricostituzione del legame originario tra l'uomo e Dio: un programma di ricerca e di azione che, lungo tutta la vicenda biografica di Agrippa, avrà per oggetto la magia e per scopo la religione.

Nel contesto del soggiorno in Italia preoccupazione specifica del filosofo di Nettesheim è quella di rivendicare per il cultore degli *studia humanitatis*, vale a dire per il pensatore incaricato di riorganizzare la cultura, un impegno educativo di rilievo fondamentale: la libertà di interpretare consapevolmente le fonti della vera sapienza allo scopo di promuovere l'edificazione e il progresso della comunità in cui opera. È un principio metodologico che Agrippa salverà con tenacia nel corso degli anni, rilevando spesso la necessità che il pensatore cristiano partecipi attivamente allo sforzo esegetico concentrato sulle Scritture. Questa operazione ha un valore marcatamente politico, in quanto assegna al pensatore laico un ruolo fondamentale nell'elaborazione del messaggio di fede, contestando chiaramente l'autorità del teologo di professione, non più depositario esclusivo dell'ortodossia. L'entità del contributo laico è tangibile

⁵⁸ VAN DER POEL, *Cornelius Agrippa*, p. 11: « Instead of a rationalistic ('Aristotelian') theology, which aims at providing Biblical truths through deductive reasoning, Agrippa champions a theology which aims, through inductive reasoning at securing the true meaning of the Word of God. The method of reasoning which Agrippa applied in all his writings in order to practice this theology combines [...] the comparison of similar Biblical texts (mostly on the level of their allegorical meaning, although the moral sense also enters into the range of Agrippa's interests) and the confirmation of the correct meaning by authors considered to be worthy of authority and approved by the Church ».

soprattutto nel caso di questioni teologiche sulle quali la Chiesa non ha ancora stabilito un fondamento dogmatico:

Nella Chiesa sono state ammesse e studiate secondo un'antichissima consuetudine svariate forme di esposizione delle Sacre Scritture, senza che per questo nessuno, professandole, possa distorcere l'esposizione delle Sacre Scritture in favore di ciò che è contrario alla fede e alla Chiesa. A ciascuno è permesso approfondire le sue convinzioni, particolarmente con più libertà nelle questioni che non sono state determinate dalla Chiesa, o in relazione alle quali non è importante per la fede sostenere che siano o non siano così, o che siano altrimenti.⁵⁹

Come già evidenziato, l'attività di pensiero che fonda il discorso teologico è per Agrippa decrittazione del messaggio divino, esame e scioglimento, tramite il contributo concorde di ragione, fede e immaginazione, degli enigmi che Dio ha rivelato ed esposto nel tessuto letterario delle Sacre Scritture. Lo studio biblico, a cui si sommano l'esercizio della giustizia e l'integrità della devozione, rappresenta un sentiero continuo di maturazione e perfezionamento per il cristiano, quand'anche l'esercizio interpretativo comporti l'esperienza di orizzonti semantici del tutto inconsueti.⁶⁰ In casi specifici di formulazione esegetica, Agrippa non esita affatto a rivendicare la paternità di letture non tradizionali, non conformi all'ortodossia cattolica.

Si pensi, ad esempio, alla tesi rischiosa e controversa che sorregge l'opuscolo *De originali peccato*, risalente quasi certamente al 1518, ma pubblicato anch'esso nel 1529. L'opinione 'disputabilis dumtaxat, et fortasse non falsa' è proposta e

⁵⁹ AGRIPPA, *Defensio propositionum*, fol. 17v: « Multiplices enim sensus exponendi Sacras Scripturas in Ecclesia recepti sunt et vetustissima consuetudine frequentati, in quibus modo nemo retorqueat Sacrae Scripturae expositionem ad id quod contrariatur fidei et Ecclesiae. Unicuique in suo sensu abundare licet, magis autem libere in his quae nondum sunt per Ecclesiam determinata, aut quorum nihil interest ad fidem utrum sint, vel non sint sic, vel aliter teneantur »; cf. ZAMBELLI, « Cornelio Agrippa, Erasmo », p. 32-33: « La polemica sulla legittimità dell'intervento dei laici e degli umanisti nelle questioni teologiche, da questi scritti del periodo centrale della vita di Agrippa continuerà e sarà sempre più fondamentale, e sempre più *erasmiana*, nelle opere conclusive. Essa rappresenta il filo rosso che congiunge le meditazioni occasionali sulla dignità delle donne, sul matrimonio e su certi punti dell'interpretazione evangelica con le opere conclusive, il *De vanitate* e le relative autodifese (*Querela*, *Apologia*, *Dialogus de vanitate*) che costituiscono un tragico e fermo bilancio delle sue convinzioni di fronte alle condanne e persecuzioni dei 'Theologastri' ».

⁶⁰ VAN DER POEL, *Cornelius Agrippa*, p. 264: « More specifically, he embraces a theology which confines itself to the study of those elements in Christian revelation which remain uncertain. This implies that theologians should not debate the articles of faith and the other points concerning which there exists a dogma or binding council pronouncements embodying religious truth. In their research, theologians should aim at reaching an understanding of the profound truth concerning the uncertainties in the revelation, that is, at reaching a proper understanding of God's intentions ».

argomentata senza riserve retoriche o cautele nicodemitiche. L'episodio descritto nel racconto di *Genesi* è decodificabile a tutti gli effetti in chiave allegorica: la trasgressione adamitica allude al rapporto sessuale tra l'uomo e la donna.⁶¹ Analogamente, i protagonisti del racconto simboleggiano le facoltà dell'anima e il loro rapporto in un contesto strettamente filosofico: Adamo è la fede, Eva la ragione, il Serpente i sensi e la sensualità; il peccato consiste nella volontà di offuscare la fede che, per il tramite della ragione, abbandona la sapienza e l'obbedienza a Dio al fine di assecondare la percezione sensibile, giungendo così a erigere al rango di scienza l'esperienza confusa dei sensi.⁶² Nella lettera dedicatoria che accompagna il testo dell'orazione, Agrippa chiarisce il suo punto di vista, rivendicando la libertà di dibattere su quei luoghi della Scrittura relativamente ai quali né la dottrina della Chiesa né la tradizione patristica hanno espresso un giudizio unanime e concorde, cristallizzando così un profilo dogmatico:

Varie furono le teorie sul peccato originale e sulla prima trasgressione dell'uomo fra gli interpreti più dotti e insigni delle Sacre Scritture, sia fra gli antichi che fra i più recenti. Avendo spesso riflettuto su queste teorie, mi sembrava che essi non avessero scritto altro che cose oscure e ambigue. Pertanto, dopo aver tralasciato, non certo trascurato, le loro opinioni, presenterò una mia opinione, nuova e diversa, perlomeno discutibile e forse non falsa. Non so se qualcuno prima di me abbia formulato proprio questa opinione. Qualora qualcuno l'abbia fatto, non lo offenderò certo se ne rivendicherò la paternità, nella misura in cui con l'impegno del mio ingegno e tramite lo studio delle Scritture ho sottratto questa opinione alle tenebre della negligenza.⁶³

⁶¹ AGRIPPA, *De originali peccato*, in Id., *De Nobilitate & Praecellentia Foeminei sexus, ad Margaretam Augustam Austriaco(rum) et Burgundionum Principem...*, Michael Hillenius in Rapo, Antverpiae 1529, fol. 15v: « Ipsa autem opinio nostra talis est, non aliud fuisse originale peccatum, quam carnalem copulam viri et mulieris ».

⁶² Ibid., fol. 14r-v: « Erant in Paradiso Adam et Eva, erat in eo etiam serpens callidior cunctis animantibus terrae. Adam quidem fides est stabilita in Deo, fundamentum rationis. Ideo ex costa Adae creata est Eva, ratio libera. Serpens autem est ipsa sensualitas quae serpit in terrenis, caducis, infimis et carnalibus. Hic itaque serpens per concupiscentiam sensibilibus tentavit Evam, rationem scilicet, quae acquiescens serpenti, ipsis puta sensuum illecebris, decepta est; quae deinde per discursum argumentativum in sensibilibus decepit virum Adam, deiciens fidem, quae delapsa in sensibilia, nihil plus veri credens, quam ex sensibilibus per rationem demonstrari potest. Defecit adeo divinaque cognitione et contemplatione, ad quam creata est a Deo ». Per quanto riguarda l'ipotesi esegetica che sorregge l'opuscolo di Agrippa rinvio a VAN DER POEL, « Agrippa von Nettesheim and Rhetoric », p. 177-206; cf. anche Id., *Cornelius Agrippa*, p. 233-245.

⁶³ AGRIPPA, *De originali peccato*, fol. 13r: « De originali peccato primumque hominis transgressione apud doctissimos praestantissimosque tam veteres quam recentiores Sacrarum Litterarum interpretes variae feruntur sententiae, quas animo mecum cum saepe revolverem, nihil mihi praeter obscura quaedam et ambigua scripsisse videbantur. Non contemptis igitur sed relictis eorum opinionibus, aliam novamque et meam opinionem (disputabilem dumtaxat, et fortasse

Il valore antidogmatico di questo approccio è rimarcato nella volontà di non asserire, cioè di non presentare articoli di fede o di scienza, bensì di avanzare opinioni,⁶⁴ ossia discutere argomenti passibili di critica, confutazione o rettifica, comunque maturati tramite il libero esercizio facoltà razionale nell'analisi delle Scritture.⁶⁵

Molti teologi, sia antichi sia più recenti, hanno elaborato numerose opinioni su questo argomento [scil. il peccato originale] e ciascuno di essi approfondisce le sue convinzioni. Non so se sia meritevole di indulgenza il fatto di aggiungere alle loro la mia opinione; opinione dico, non fede, non scienza. Se essa risulterà errata, non sarò quindi considerato uno che erra nella vera fede e che viola la pura sapienza cristiana. Stando così le cose, mi è lecito esprimere liberamente un'opinione. E qualora io – poiché sono un uomo di età immatura e dotato di poca intelligenza e istruzione – non riesca a fornire un numero sufficiente di testimonianze scritturali, così come richiede la questione, per illustrare la mia interpretazione, forse mi seguiranno alcuni uomini più dotti di me, i quali approveranno la mia opinione. Confido, infatti, sul fatto che mi sosterranno non poco nella misura in cui confermeranno la mia opinione con argomenti e ragioni più valide.⁶⁶

non falsam) adferam. Nescius si quispiam ante me eandem opinatus sit, qui si quis est, nullam facio illi iniuriam si hanc opinionem meam esse dixerit, quatenus illam non aliunde quam proprii ingenii diligentia Scripturarumque examine ex negligentiae tenebris eripuerim ».

⁶⁴ VAN DER POEL, *Cornelius Agrippa*, p. 179–180: « In other words, the term 'opinio' denotes exactly the dialectical nature of Agrippa's theological writings. In fact, Agrippa had used this term in *De originali peccato* to explain that this declamation was meant as a contribution to the debate on Original Sin. [...] In *De originali peccato*, Agrippa also uses the term 'opinio' to express the intellectual modesty with which he formulates his contribution to the debate. More specifically, he uses it to clarify the dialectical nature of his treatise and to declare his willingness to submit it to the authority of the Church ».

⁶⁵ ZAMBELLI, « *Humanae litterae, verbum divinum, docta ignorantia* negli ultimi scritti di Enrico Cornelio Agrippa », *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana*, 45 (1966), p. 209: « La lezione erasmiana aveva insegnato ad Agrippa che anche i testi a cui entrambi riconoscevano autorità e dignità sovrumane erano frutto della stesura di uomini che ne erano stati strumenti imperfetti, e fallibili secondo la natura umana; il risultato della loro elaborazione era dunque soggetto, esso pure, alle leggi della critica storica: [...] Le contraddizioni e la fallibilità dei testi sacri, sottolineando la differenza essenziale fra il divino e l'umano, sono ricondotte esse stesse a scopi apologetici; e questa impostazione presenta la critica storica, ispirata a Valla e ad Erasmo, su un fondamento assai opportuno per quei tempi. Gerolamo medesimo riconosceva che gli Apostoli e gli Evangelisti avevano talvolta commesso errori di memoria. Parimenti Agostino pensava che gli Apostoli ignorassero qualche fatto e s'ingannassero in qualche caso, e che persino Pietro avesse errato in materia di fede e fosse stato corretto da Paolo ».

⁶⁶ AGRIPPA, *De originali peccato*, fol. 15v: « Multi et veteres et recentiores theologi super hac re multa opinati sunt et unusquisque eorum in suo sensu abundat, quiscum nescio an plane venia dignum sit meam quoque opinionem conferre, opinionem dico, non fidem, non scientiam, ut si erronea fuerit opinio mea, ab errore verae fidei ac incontaminatae christianae sapientiae praevaricatione sim alienus. Atque hac conditione nunc libere opinari licebit et si (ut enim homo sum immaturae aetatis, ingenii ac litteraturae minoris) in sensu meo non tantis

Sul piano educativo il metodo che Agrippa elabora per rinnovare la riflessione teologica prevede in primo luogo una formazione adeguata, ossia l'acquisizione della competenza dottrinale, letteraria, linguistica, storica necessaria per accedere alla testualità della Parola di Dio; in secondo luogo l'insegnamento, vale a dire l'esercizio di esposizione e commento delle Scritture, che si realizza nella discussione aperta, non dogmatica, non ignara delle fonti e sprezzante della tradizione, condotta criticamente sul testo sacro; in terzo luogo, la conversione spirituale, un passaggio peculiarmente filosofico. 'Conversione' significa in Agrippa un atto di coscienza grazie al quale l'anima dell'uomo giunge a purificarsi dall'ignoranza, dall'errore e dal peccato, scegliendo di amare Dio e la sua sapienza.⁶⁷ La conversione certifica, dunque, in un'esperienza tangibile e condivisibile il fine ultimo della teologia, il processo di rigenerazione spirituale dell'uomo.

Il programma di Agrippa assume così i caratteri di una riforma condivisa, programmaticamente rivolta all'intera comunità e incentrata, per l'appunto, sulla discussione e trasmissione dei testi che custodiscono una sapienza salvifica, capace di risvegliare le coscienze e di tradursi in una prassi di rinnovamento del vincolo sociale.⁶⁸ Il percorso sapienziale, cioè lo studio e l'apprendimento delle

Scripturarum testimoniis abundem, ut res ipsa requirit, forsitan sequentur me doctiores quidam, quibus haec nostra opinio non displicebit: ab his me non modicum adiuvari posse confido quatenus validioribus rationibus ac argumentis suis opinionem nostram robustiorem effecerint ».

⁶⁷ Cf. ID., *De triplici ratione*, p. 142: « Anima itaque nostra, carne inclusa corruptibili nimioque eius demersa commercio [FICINUS, *Theol. plat.* IX, 2, ed. MARCEL, vol. II, p. 11], nisi viam carnis superaverit fueritque pristinam naturam sortita evaseritque mens pura, quasi par angelo, frustra laborat in divinis. Sed quae anima haec est, nisi quae indubia spe et superni numinis desiderio phantasiam silere iubet? Et quae, veram fidem firmiter amplexa, assuetis rationis naturalis discursibus ammodo non confidit, et quae, ardenti amore adhaerens Deo, sola vivit mente, evasit angelus, capit toto pectore Deum? [FICINUS, *Theol. plat.* XIII, 4, ed. MARCEL, vol. II, p. 237] ».

⁶⁸ Ciò vale soprattutto per la magia: cf. CHARLES ZIKA, *Exorcising our Demons. Magic, Witchcraft and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe*, Brill, Leiden 2003 (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, 91), p. 150–151: « The most critical and distinctive characteristic of Agrippa's occult philosophy or magic, [...] was its concern with 'operation'. Magic did not involve a mystical escape from society and the world for scholars such as Agrippa – certainly not from the courtly and academic world which could provide them with status and prestige, and in Agrippa's case, also not from the world of the practicing physician, orator and advocate. The ultimately successful denigration of 'magic' in later decades and centuries, in ways which Agrippa was endeavouring to resist, makes it difficult for us to accept this social element in sixteenth-century understanding of the term. Magic involved a knowledge which could 'operate' in the world, which could influence individual consciousness, provide models for group behavior, help ensure future success, mitigate the influence of evil and misfortune. And in this sense it shared common aims with the humanists, who promoted the rhetorical and literary skills of antiquity and were concerned to influence behavior through eloquence and persuasions. Both

verità che accompagnano l'anima del cristiano alla salvezza, risulta pienamente accessibile a chiunque decida di intraprenderlo: « Omnis itaque homo – ribadisce Agrippa – potest Deum cognoscere, si velit ».⁶⁹ A ben vedere, tale puntualizzazione rimarca con efficacia, al di là delle divergenze di approccio sottolineate in precedenza, l'affinità intellettuale che lega indissolubilmente la riforma di Agrippa alla lezione di Erasmo. Come insegnava lo stesso Erasmo, organizzando l'impianto teorico della *philosophia Christi* che avrebbe fondato il *Novum Instrumentum*, la celeberrima edizione aggiornata del Nuovo Testamento (1516), il campo della teologia non è privilegio dottrinale riservato ai dotti o ai teologi di professione, bensì assume un valore fondamentale per l'educazione di tutta la società cristiana, giacché il verbo di Dio è patrimonio aperto a tutti gli uomini, di qualunque condizione essi siano: 'L'essere dotti – scrive Erasmo – è riservato a pochi, mentre a nessuno è negato di essere cristiano, di avere fede e oserei perfino dire che a nessuno è negato di essere teologo'.⁷⁰ Questa lezione, che Agrippa trae in modo particolare dallo studio della *Paraclesis ad lectorem pium* di Erasmo, resterà viva e operante anche molti anni più tardi, nelle pagine radicali del *De vanitate* in cui l'autore vorrà definire la missione educativa del teologo:

Non crediate che la parola di Dio spetti solo ai teologi, ma ad ogni essere umano, uomo, donna, vecchio, giovane, bambino, indigeno, straniero o forestiero. [...] Tutta la teologia deve essere comune a tutti i fedeli, ma a ciascuno secondo la capacità e la misura del dono dello Spirito santo. È dunque compito del buon dottore distribuire a ciascuno in base a quanto ognuno è capace di comprendere, all'uno in latte, all'altro in solido cibo, e non privare nessuno del pasto della verità necessaria.⁷¹

In conclusione, considerando la vicenda intellettuale di Agrippa, il soggiorno di formazione in Italia costituisce una stagione altamente significativa, un'occasione

conceptions of knowledge privileged the uses to which knowledge was put over the coherence of the system through which it was enunciated ».

⁶⁹ AGRIPPA, *De triplici ratione*, p. 112.

⁷⁰ ERASMUS, *Paraclesis*, LB, V, col. 141, in FIORELLA DE MICHELIS PINTACUDA, *Tra Erasmo e Lutero*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma 2001 (Studi e testi del Rinascimento europeo, 11), p. 163.

⁷¹ AGRIPPA, *De Vanitate*, cap. 100, fol. S2r-v: « Non est ergo, ut putetis, ipsum [scil. verbum Dei] ad solos Theologos pertinere, sed ad omnem hominem, sive vir, sive mulier, sive senex, sive iuvenis, sive puer, sive indigena, sive advena, sive proselytus [...]. Quin tota ipsa Theologia omnibus fidelibus communis debet, unicuique autem secundum capacitatem et mensuram donationis Spiritus sancti. Boni itaque doctoris est unicuique secundum id quod confert quantum capere potest distribuere, illi quidem in lacte, alteri autem in solido cibo [Hebr., 5, 12], et neminem necessarie veritatis pastu defraudare »; cf. PERRONE COMPAGNI, « L'innocenza di Eva. Retorica e teologia nel *De nobilitate foeminei sexus* di Agrippa », *Bruniana & Campanelliana*, 12/1 (2006), p. 79: « La teologia non è ambito riservato a professionisti, ma è cosa di tutti – perché è sapere isagogico, che inquadra la vita umana in una prospettiva ultramondana e nello stesso tempo dirige la ragione mondana e la rende legittima e fruttuosa ».

per elaborare premesse, definire obiettivi, impostare un programma culturale che segnerà coerentemente anche gli sviluppi successivi. Nel corso di un periodo così ricco di meditazione ed elaborazione teorica – caratterizzato, tra l'altro, da numerose letture ermetiche, neoplatoniche, cabalistiche, lulliane – emerge marcatamente il profilo ideologico di Agrippa, oggi alquanto distante dal ritratto contraddittorio che la storiografia novecentesca ha delineato in alcuni casi: non più un occultista enciclopedico, compilatore di testi magici, preoccupato soltanto divulgare le discipline esoteriche in un sistema compiuto;⁷² non più un critico mordace delle scienze e delle arti, rivolto a screditare beffardamente il sapere umano di fronte alla superiorità incontrovertibile delle Sacre Scritture;⁷³ bensì un appassionato fautore delle *humanae litterae*,⁷⁴ teologo e riformatore religioso,⁷⁵ impegnato nello studio sistematico degli antichi filosofi e nel recupero della riflessione religiosa che l'antichità ha trasmesso; insomma un pensatore del Rinascimento, interessato a riorganizzare il sapere scientifico attraverso una proposta filosofica che, rifacendosi alla religiosità e all'antropologia di carattere ermetico-neoplatonico, sappia congiungere magia e teologia in un tragitto sapienziale comune, destinato a concludersi nella palingenesi della comunità dei Cristiani.

⁷² LYNN THORNDIKE, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. VI, Columbia University Press, New York 1923–1941, p. 129–131; FRANCIS A. YATES, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1964, p. 130.

⁷³ RICHARD H. POPKIN, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes*, Koninklijke Van Gorcum & Comp. N. V., Assen 1960, p. 24–25; NAUERT, *Agrippa and the Crisis*, p. 304.

⁷⁴ ZAMBELLI, « Cornelio Agrippa nelle fonti », p. 173.

⁷⁵ ROSAMARIA ALIBRANDI, « Magia, filosofia occulta e Inquisizione. Il lato oscuro della modernità », *Heliopolis*, 10/1 (2012), p. 9: « Il vero problema di Agrippa, che vive intensamente gli anni della Riforma, sembra dunque essere quello religioso [...]. La riforma della magia per Agrippa deve condurre alla restaurazione di una *ars miraculorum* che la renda operativa in tutti i campi del sapere recuperando la sua matrice originariamente religiosa, poiché la scienza e la ragione si sono allontanate dalla fonte originaria della sapienza ».

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A NEWLY DISCOVERED TREATISE BY ABRAHAM IBN EZRA AND TWO TREATISES ATTRIBUTED TO AL-KINDĪ IN A LATIN TRANSLATION BY HENRY BATE*

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Abstract

The main objective of the current study is to offer the first critical edition, accompanied by an English translation and introductory study, of a tripartite Latin text addressing world astrology preserved in a single manuscript: MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 1407, fols. 55r–62r (14th/15th century). This study also includes the Middle English translation of discontinuous sections of this tripartite Latin text as transmitted in MS London, Royal College of Physicians, 384, fols. 83v–85r. It is argued that the first part of this tripartite text incorporates a hitherto unknown Latin translation by Henry Bate of the lost third version of Abraham Ibn Ezra's *Sefer ha-'Olam*. The other two parts include two Latin translations, also carried out by Henry Bate, of treatises ascribed to Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kindī, the « philosopher of the Arabs ».

Key Words

120 conjunctions; Abū Ma'shar; Enoch (Hermes); Iohannes Hispalensis; Kanakah, the Indian; length of the solar year; lunar mansions; Māshā'allāh; monotheistic religions; Sahl ibn Bishr, the Jew; Saturn-Jupiter conjunctions; Tables of Pisa; Tables of Winchester; weather forecasting.



* We are grateful to Julio Samsó for his comments on a first version of this article.

I. INTRODUCTION

Henry Bate of Mechelen (1246–d. after 1310) is a key figure in the reception of Hebrew, Arabic, and Greek texts in the Latin West at the end of the thirteenth century. Bate was also the first to bring the astrological work of the twelfth-century Jewish polymath Abraham Ibn Ezra (c. 1089–c. 1161) to the knowledge of Latin readers by means of an extensive translational project.¹ The main objective of the current study is to offer the first critical edition, accompanied by an English translation and introductory study, of a tripartite Latin text addressing world astrology preserved in a single manuscript: MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 1407, fols. 55r–62r (14th/15th century). David Juste was the first to identify the source in question and report on the links between it and Henry Bate and Abraham Ibn Ezra.² Building on Juste's discovery, this study argues that the first part of this tripartite text (henceforth Part I) incorporates a hitherto unknown Latin translation by Henry Bate of the lost third version of Abraham Ibn Ezra's *Sefer ha-'Olam* (henceforth 'Olam III). The other two parts (henceforth Part II and Part III) include two Latin translations, also carried out by Henry Bate, of treatises ascribed to Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kindī, the « philosopher of the Arabs » (d. after 866).

The critical edition of the Latin text, as well as an introduction to this edition, were prepared by Carlos Steel. The corresponding English translation was carried out by Shlomo Sela with the assistance of all the other authors of this study. This study also includes the Middle English translation of discontinuous sections of this tripartite Latin text as transmitted in MS London, Royal College of Physicians, 384, fols. 83v–85r. The edition of the Middle English translation and introduction to this edition were prepared by C. Philipp E. Nothaft.

In the first part of the ensuing introductory study, Shlomo Sela discusses the connection between Part I and Abraham Ibn Ezra's oeuvre and shows that Part I incorporates a hitherto unknown Latin translation of Ibn Ezra's 'Olam III. This is followed by Philipp Nothaft's analyses of the astronomical content of two chapters of Part I. Then David Juste examines the three horoscopes at the end of Part I. Next Shlomo Sela shows that Henry Bate was the translator of the tripartite Latin text and attempts to identify the translator of the Arabic into Hebrew translations involved in our tripartite text. Then Charles Burnett compares the doctrine of al-Kindī in Part II and Part III with the doctrine found in his other texts on weather forecasting and other aspects of general astrology and discusses whether the texts presented here may be considered as authentic Kindian treatises. Finally, David

¹ SHLOMO SELA, « The Ibn Ezra–Henry Bate Astrological Connection and the Three Abrahams », *Mediterranea*, 2 (2017), p. 163–186.

² CARLOS STEEL, STEVEN VANDEN BROECKE, DAVID JUSTE, SHLOMO SELA, *The Astrological Autobiography of a Medieval Philosopher: Henry Bate's 'Nativitas' (1280–1281)*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2018 (Ancient and Medieval Philosophy. Series 1, 17), p. 49–50.

Juste describes the two manuscripts in which are preserved the Latin and Middle English translations of Ibn Ezra's 'Olam III and the two Kindian treatises.

I.1. *A Hitherto Unknown Latin Translation of Abraham Ibn Ezra's 'Olam III* (Shlomo Sela)³

The first part of the tripartite text in MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat 1407 (fols. 55r–58r, henceforth Part I)⁴ covers almost half of the tripartite text (4,000 out of 8,400 words) and addresses a miscellany of topics related to world astrology, as will be shown below. Part I is not equipped with an incipit or a colophon from which we may determine whether this miscellany of discussions constitutes a translation of a Hebrew or Arabic original text, a compilation of fragments taken from a variety of sources, or an original Latin text addressing world astrology. Nevertheless, in what follows it will be shown that the contents of Part I are intimately related to Abraham Ibn Ezra's work. The following discussion is divided into two parts. The first shows that there are striking resemblances between the bulk of Part I and various parts of Abraham Ibn Ezra's work, as if Part I were the Latin translation of some unknown treatise by Ibn Ezra. The second part argues that Part I is a hitherto unknown Latin translation carried out by Henry Bate of the lost third version of Abraham Ibn Ezra's *Sefer ha-'Olam* (henceforth 'Olam III).

I.1.1.

According to its content, Part I may be divided into seven chapters addressing topics related to world astrology. The following discussion shows that, although there are no *verbatim* quotations from Ibn Ezra's work in Part I, each of its chapters evinces striking resemblances with Ibn Ezra's work. This strongly suggests that Part I is the Latin translation of some unknown version of Ibn Ezra's *Sefer ha-'Olam*, which address world astrology. That there are no *verbatim* quotations from other treatises by Ibn Ezra is typical of Ibn Ezra's *modus operandi*. He writes his books in various versions but never quotes *verbatim* from one version into another of the same book, although he incorporates ideas developed in one book into another.

1. The first chapter of Part I, a preface mentioning the hierarchical relationship between the superlunary and sublunary bodies, speaking about emanation by means of light, and highlighting the power of the superlunaries as a function of

³ Sections I and V of this introduction were supported by the Israel Science Foundation (grant No. 289/17).

⁴ See below Part I, §1.1:1–9 through §7.1:1–21. Here Part I, §7.1:1–21 stands for First part of the tripartite text, seventh section (« On the great conjunction »), first paragraph, sentences 1 through 21, of the Latin text and its corresponding English translation.

their size and their relative closeness to the Earth, is similar to the preface of Ibn Ezra's *Sefer ha-Me'orot*.⁵ Ibn Ezra does not mention in his astrological treatises «souls of living things that are like forms coming from the movers of the orbs and from the light of the fixed and wandering stars», but he does so in his biblical commentaries.⁶ The statement that the human soul is connected to the superlunary world finds its counterpart in one of the versions of Ibn Ezra's *Sefer ha-She'elot*.⁷ The brief account of the structure of the superlunary world is couched in similar terms to those used in the prefaces of *Reshit Hokhmah*, and *Mishpeṭei ha-Mazzalot*.⁸

2. The second chapter of Part I, on the nature of planets and the zodiacal signs, is a close counterpart of a similar discussion in the first version of Ibn Ezra's *Sefer ha-Ṭe'amim*, which, in its turn, is based on a similar account in Abū Ma'shar's *Great Introduction*.⁹ In particular, Ibn Ezra's distinctive hallmark in this chapter of Part I is found in the claim that the judgments of the stars are derived from their proportions, and in the ascription of numbers to the planets.¹⁰ These numbers depend on the theory, of Pythagorean origin, that each of the seven planets has numbers that correspond to the musical tones produced by the rotation of their orbs. Ibn Ezra explicitly ascribes this theory to Ptolemy in both versions of *Sefer ha-Ṭe'amim*, where he assigns a number to each of the seven planets.¹¹ Virtually the same numbers ascribed to the planets in *Ṭe'amim* I, *Ṭe'amim* II and in the second chapter of Part I are found in the *Canobic Inscription*, an early work by Ptolemy, predating the *Almagest*.¹² But Ibn Ezra probably derived the information on this theory from the *Epistle on Music* of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', which incorporates a full account of the theory.¹³

⁵ See Part I, §1.1:1–4; Cf. *Me'orot*, ed. SELA, §1:1–3, p. 452–453.

⁶ See Part I, §1.1:2; cf. Ibn Ezra's long comm. on Gen. 1:1, and long comm. on Ex. 3:15.

⁷ See Part I, §1.1:5; cf. *She'elot* I, ed. SELA, I, §2:1–3, §1:3–7, p. 240–241.

⁸ See Part I, §1.1:6–9; cf. *Reshit Hokhmah*, ed. SELA, §1.2:1–2 through §1.7:1–3, p. 50–55; *Mishpeṭei ha-Mazzalot*, ed. SELA, §1:1–2, p. 488–489.

⁹ See Part I, §2.1:1–3 through §2.6:1–4; cf. *Ṭe'amim* I, ed. SELA, §1.5:1–7, p. 32–37, and ABŪ MA'SHAR, *The Great Introduction to Astrology*, ed. and trans. KEIJI YAMAMOTO, CHARLES BURNETT, Brill, Leiden 2019 (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science, 106), vol. I, IV 1.4–1.10, p. 347–377.

¹⁰ See Part I, §4.1:1–4.

¹¹ See *Ṭe'amim* I, ed. SELA, §4.1:1–3, p. 68–71 and *Ṭe'amim* II, ed. SELA, §5.5:6, p. 230–231. I am not aware of other astrological texts that applied this theory to explain the natures of the planets.

¹² See NOEL M. SWERDLOW, «Ptolemy's *Harmonics* and the 'Tones of the Universe' in the *Canobic Inscription*», in CHARLES BURNETT, JAN P. HOGENDIJK, KIM PLOFKER, MICHIO YANO (eds.), *Studies in the History of the Exact Sciences in Honour of David Pingree*, Brill, Leiden – Boston, 2004 (Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Science: Texts and Studies, 54), p. 137–180.

¹³ *Epistle on Music of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*, ed. AMNON SHILOAH, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv 1978, p. 38, 45–46.

In addition, a statement ascribed in Part I to al-Kindī regarding the nature of the beginning of the revolutions of the four seasons, corresponds closely to similar statements ascribed to al-Kindī in *Ṭe'amim* I and *Ṭe'amim* II.¹⁴

3. The third chapter of Part I, on planetary conjunctions, has a close counterpart in 'Olam I and 'Olam II.¹⁵ Here Ibn Ezra's signature is particularly manifest in that, just before the presentation of the three types of Saturn-Jupiter conjunctions, Part I puts forward the numerical-cosmological pattern of the 120 conjunctions of the seven planets (that is, the sum of the combinations of two, three, four, five, six, and seven planets) borrowed from the fiftieth aphorism of Pseudo-Ptolemy's *Centiloquium* and frequently mentioned in Ibn Ezra's biblical exegesis and astrological work.¹⁶ Put in other words: we can find the accounts of the pattern of the 120 conjunctions of the seven planets and of the three types of Saturn-Jupiter conjunctions together, the one immediately after the other, only in Part I and in works authored by Ibn Ezra or closely associated to Ibn Ezra, such as the first part, on world astrology, of the *Epitome totius astrologiae* (henceforth *Epitome*).¹⁷

A further distinctive feature is the reference *en bloc* to the zodiacal signs in charge of, or the reference to the Saturn-Jupiter conjunctions that heralded, the emergence of the three monotheistic religions, and in particular to the reference to Aquarius as the sign in charge of the Jews, or to a Saturn-Jupiter conjunction in Aquarius that heralded the Jews' exodus from Egypt. As in the previous example, such a statement can only be found in Part I and in works authored by Ibn Ezra or closely associated to Ibn Ezra, such as the *Liber Abraham Iudei de nativitatibus*.¹⁸

4. The brief fourth chapter of Part I, on the judgments of the world-years, enjoins the reader not to rely on the cycles of 2000 years according to the degrees of the zodiac.¹⁹ This is a veritable rarity: I could not find such a cycle in astrological literature except for the first paragraph of *Liber Interrogationum* (henceforth *Interrogationes*), the Latin translation of the lost third version of Ibn Ezra's *Sefer ha-*

¹⁴ See Part I, §2.3:1–3; cf. *Ṭe'amim* I, ed. SELA, §1.4:2–3, p. 32–33 and *Ṭe'amim* II, ed. SELA, §2.1:6–10, p. 184–187.

¹⁵ See Part I §3.1:1 through §3.4:1–3; cf. 'Olam I, ed. SELA, §2:1–3, p. 52–53 through §11:1–5, p. 58–59 and 'Olam II, ed. SELA, §1:1–3, p. 156–159.

¹⁶ See SHLOMO SELA, *Abraham Ibn Ezra Latinus on Nativities: A Parallel Latin-English Critical Edition of 'Liber Nativitatum' and 'Liber Abraham Iudei de Nativitatibus'*, Brill, Leiden 2019 (Études sur le judaïsme médiéval, 78), p. 175–177.

¹⁷ See Part I §3.1:1 and §3.2:1–7; 'Olam I, ed. SELA, §2:1–3, p. 52–53 through §10:1–2, p. 56–57; 'Olam II, ed. SELA, §2:1, p. 156–157 and §3:1–4, p. 156–157; *Nativitates*, ed. SELA, I iv 1:1–8, p. 84–87 and I iv 2:1–3, p. 86–87; Ibn Ezra's long comm. on Ex. 33:21, quoted in *The Book of the World*, ed. SELA, §2:1–4, p. 272–273 and §3:1–4, p. 274–275; *Epitome totius astrologiae*, ed. JOACHIM HELLER, Johannes Montanus & Ulrich Neuber, Nuremberg 1548, I:2, sig. F1v–F2r.

¹⁸ See Part I, §3.4:1; 'Olam II, ed. SELA, §14:1–6, p. 64–165; *Nativitates*, ed. SELA, I ii 2:1–2, p. 82–83; and *De nativitatibus*, ed. SELA, II ix 5:1–3, p. 334–335.

¹⁹ See Part I, §4.1:2–3.

She'elot.²⁰ The same fourth chapter puts forward cycles of 100 and 10 years, the counterpart of which may be found in the tenth chapter of Ibn Ezra's *Reshit Hokhmah*.²¹

5. The fifth chapter of Part I puts forward two complete lists of the 28 lunar mansions. The first is devoid of astrological content and provides, for each mansion, the Arabic transliterated name and its translation, the number of stars and their magnitude, and a graphic representation of the asterism. This list is a close replica of, although not identical with, the list of lunar mansions found in chapter 17 of Abraham Bar Hiyya's *Hešbon mahalakhot ha-kokhavim* ('Calculation of the stellar motions').²² A clear indication that the Hebrew source text from which this list was translated was not authored by Abraham Bar Hiyya but by Abraham Ibn Ezra is that the concept of « magnitude of a star » is frequently denoted in Part I as *honor*, a calque of *kavod*, used by Ibn Ezra in all his star lists to denote the magnitude of a star but never employed with this meaning by Abraham Bar Hiyya.²³

The second list presents, for each mansion, the zodiacal constellation, the Arabic name and its translation, the degrees, minutes and seconds that the mansion contains, and a note specifying whether the mansion is temperate, dry, humid or temperately humid.²⁴ The Latin translations of some of the Arabic names of the lunar mansions in the second list are incompatible with the usual interpretations of the Arabic names. For example, the Arabic name of the 20th lunar mansion, *al-na'ā'im*, usually taken to denote ostriches,²⁵ is interpreted in our Latin text as « delicie ». But this Arabic name is homophonous with the Hebrew *na'im*, meaning « pleasant » or « delicious ». So, the Latin translator, or, more precisely, the intermediary Hebrew into French translator, was probably reading the Arabic names in Hebrew script, and this seems to be the reason for the misinterpretations of the Arabic names. The 20th lunar mansion includes a note specifying that this is « according to <John> of Seville and the seasons of the Indians ». This is in all likelihood a cross-reference, probably added by the translator, to the list of lunar mansions in the first part of the *Epitome*.²⁶ Indeed, the list in *Epitome* specifies first the datum whether the mansion is temperate, dry, humid or temperately humid,

²⁰ See *Interrogationes*, ed. SELA, I 1:3.

²¹ See Part I, §4.1:3; cf. *Reshit Hokhmah*, ed. SELA, §10.2:6–9, p. 268–269.

²² See Part I, §5.2:1–28; cf. SHLOMO SELA, « Chapter 17 of *Hešbon Mahalakhot ha-Kokhavim* by Abraham Bar Hiyya – The First Hebrew Catalog of Constellations, Fixed Stars and Lunar Mansions: Critical Edition, English Translation and Commentary », *Suhayl*, 15 (2017), p. 263–266, 271–272.

²³ See, below, fn. 42.

²⁴ Part I, §5.3:1–28.

²⁵ See « On the lunar stations, their risings and settings, and on their images », in AL-BĪRŪNĪ, *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*, trans. and ed. C. EDWARD SACHAU, London 1879, (Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain & Ireland), chapter 21, p. 348.

²⁶ See Part I, §5.3:20; *Epitome*, ed. JOACHIM HELLER (1548), I:11, sig. H1v–H2v.

but could not have been possibly the source text of the second list in Part I because the mansions are named there in Latin and are accompanied by the number of stars, their magnitude, and a graphical representation of the asterism.

At the end of the second list, Part I brings a note, presumably interpolated by the translator, stating that « there are six mansions that are principally humid, according to the evidence provided by al-Kindī, and Ibn Ezra enumerates only those as humid, and they have been indicated here ». In this note, (i) the reference to al-Kindī labelling six lunar mansions as « humid » points to al-Kindī's *Book on the judgments of the revolutions*, in Part III of our text,²⁷ and (ii) the reference to Ibn Ezra labelling the same lunar mansions as « humid » although other lunar mansions are moderately humid, and stating that these lunar mansions have been shown « here », points to the second list of lunar mansions in the fifth chapter of Part I.²⁸ This note demonstrates without a shadow of doubt that the translator knew that the Hebrew original of the second list of lunar mansions, and presumably that of all of Part I, were composed by Abraham Ibn Ezra. In addition, this note creates a link between Part I and Part III of our tripartite text, from the perspective of the translator.

6. The sixth chapter of Part I, on the solar year, has a close counterpart in many parts of Ibn Ezra's oeuvre. In particular, the debate about the length of the solar year in Part I bears striking resemblances with discussions of the same topic in *'Olam I*, *Moladot*, *Ṭe'amim I*, *Sefer ha-'Ibbur*, *'Iggeret ha-Shabbat*, the commentary on Leviticus 25:9, and *Liber de rationibus tabularum*.²⁹ The same applies to the discussion of the theory of *trepidatio* (i.e., a to-and-fro motion of the equinoxes or the fixed stars) in Part I, on the one hand, and in *Ṭe'amim I*, *Sefer ha-'Ibbur* and *Liber de rationibus tabularum*,³⁰ on the other. The signature of Ibn Ezra is also felt in that Part I poses and solves the problem in terms of « revealing a secret ».³¹ For more details about the connection between the sixth chapter of Part I, and particularly about

²⁷ See Part III, §13:1.

²⁸ See Part I, §5.3:1–28. Note that in this list precisely six lunar mansions are labelled humid (no. 4, 12, 16, 17, 22, 27) and five lunar mansions are labelled temperate humid (no. 7, 10, 15, 19, 20)

²⁹ See Part I, §6.1:1–7; §6.3:1–15; cf. *'Olam I*, ed. SELA, §17:1–12, p. 62–63; *Moladot*, ed. SELA, IV 1:1–9, p. 182–185; *Ṭe'amim I*, ed. SELA, §2.12:4–5, p. 50–51; *Sefer Ha'ibbur*, in *Sefer Ha'ibbur: A Treatise on the Calendar by Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra*, ed. and trans. MORDECHAI S. GOODMAN, Ktav, Jerusalem 2011, p. 56–57 (Hebrew part) and p. 95–98 (English part); *'Iggeret ha-Shabbat*, in *The Sabbath Epistle of Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra: 'Iggeret haShabbat*, ed. and trans. MORDECHAI S. GOODMAN, Ktav, Jerusalem 2009, p. 9–10; Ibn Ezra's comm. on Lev. 25:9 quoted and translated in SHLOMO SELA, *Abraham Ibn Ezra and the Rise of Medieval Hebrew Science*, Brill, Leiden 2003 (Brill's Series in Jewish Studies, 32), p. 274–275, 373–374; *Liber de rationibus tabularum*, in *El libro de los fundamentos de las Tablas astronómicas de R. Abraham Ibn 'Ezra*, ed. JOSÉ M.^a MILLÁS VALLICROSA, CSIC, Madrid 1947 (Instituto Arias Montano, Ser. D, 2), p. 75–76.

³⁰ See Part I, §6.2:1–9; cf. *Ṭe'amim I*, ed. SELA, §2.12:7, p. 50–51; *Sefer ha-'Ibbur*, p. 67–68 (Hebrew part) and p. 122–123 (English part); *Liber de rationibus tabularum*, ed. MILLAS VALLICROSA, p. 77.

³¹ See Part I, §6.3:1; cf. *Ṭe'amim II*, ed. SELA, §6.2:6, p. 236–237.

the astronomical parameters of this chapter, readers are invited to consult the next section of the introduction.

7. The seventh chapter of Part I – about calculating the horoscopes of the great conjunction Saturn-Jupiter of 1067 – has no counterpart in Ibn Ezra's oeuvre. However, it is important to take into consideration two points. First, as a rule, some versions of a book by Ibn Ezra incorporate idiosyncratic features that do not occur in the other versions of the same book. Second, in the last part of his career Ibn Ezra resided in the region of London, and during his stay in England he wrote highly specialized astronomical treatises and translations, such as *Iggeret ha-Shabbat* ('the Epistle on the Sabbath'), a calendrical monograph, and the Hebrew translation of *Ibn al-Muthannā's Commentary on the Astronomical Tables of al-Khwārizmī*.³² Hence, it is plausible that during his stay in England, Ibn Ezra was commissioned by a Jew from Winchester to compose a work on world astrology with highly specialized astronomical data. As will be shown below, the Hebrew source text behind Part I was composed precisely in the last part of Ibn Ezra's career, and this fits well with the aforementioned scenario. Readers are also invited to consult the section of the introduction entitled «The Tables of Winchester», which discusses the links between Ibn Ezra and the seventh chapter of Part I, and argues that Ibn Ezra compiled the astronomical tables mentioned in this chapter.

I.1.2.

That Part I is the Latin translation of an underlying Hebrew text, and not an original Latin composition or compilation of Latin texts, is borne out by the presence in the Latin text of the following features. (i) Hebraisms such as *honor*, *sinistra* and *dextra*, calques of כבוד, שמאלי and ימיני, which denote respectively the magnitude of a fixed star, and the northern and southern cardinal directions. (ii) Interpolations by the Hebrew or Latin translator indicating that the text underlying the Latin translation was originally composed in Hebrew. This emerges from the following descriptions of the 21st and 22nd lunar mansions:

Albalda et est in similitudine littere que apud Hebreos uocatur Heez subuerse. = *al-balda*, it is in the likeness of the letter that the Hebrews call *het* but reversed.³³

Saadebach, et est hoc difficile scribere in lingua Hebrayca et significat eufortunium carnificis seu decollatoris. = *sa'd al-dhābiḥ*, and this is difficult to write in Hebrew, and it means the luck of the butcher or slaughterer.³⁴

³² See SHLOMO SELA, GAD FREUDENTHAL, «Abraham Ibn Ezra's Scholarly Writings: A Chronological Listing», *Aleph*, 6 (2006), items 59 and 60, p. 46–47.

³³ Part I, §5.2:21.

³⁴ Part I, §5.2:22.

We have seen above that Part I bears striking similarities to different parts of Ibn Ezra's work, as if it were the Latin translation of an unknown work by Ibn Ezra. Let us now identify this work.

Chapter six of *Liber Electionum* (henceforth *Electiones*), the Latin translation of the lost third version of Ibn Ezra's *Sefer ha-Mivḥarim* (henceforth *Mivḥarim* III) offers an account of the significations of each of the 28 lunar mansions according to the method of elections.³⁵ The chapter begins with a theoretical introduction about the 28 lunar mansions, at the end of which we read: « Et in *Libro iurium seculi* explanabo formam mansionum » = « In the *Book of the Judgments of the World*, I will explain the shape of the mansions ».³⁶ This is the typical form in which Ibn Ezra directs the reader from one of his Hebrew astrological treatises to consult another of his Hebrew astrological writings. *Liber iurium seculi*, or *Liber iudiciorum seculi*, as *Electiones* refers to the same book a few lines later regarding the first lunar mansion,³⁷ is a literal Latin rendering of *Sefer Mishpētei ha-'Olam*, an alternative name for Ibn Ezra's *Sefer ha-'Olam*.³⁸

This cross-reference from *Mivḥarim* III cannot refer to 'Olam I or 'Olam II because neither of them includes a complete list of the 28 lunar mansions nor any reference to « the shape of the mansions », = *formam mansionum*, an expression which in this context means a graphical representation of the asterisms of each of the mansion.³⁹ It emerges then that this future-tense cross-reference from *Mivḥarim* III certainly points to an account of the lunar mansions in the hitherto unknown 'Olam III. That Part I is in all likelihood the Latin translation of the lost 'Olam III referred to in *Mivḥarim* III is indicated by the fact that, as shown above, each of the items in the first complete list of the 28 lunar mansions found in the fifth chapter of Part I is accompanied by a graphical representation of the asterisms of the corresponding lunar mansion.⁴⁰

We have seen that this list of Part I is a close replica of the list of lunar mansions found in chapter 17 of Abraham Bar Ḥiyya's *Ḥešbon mahalakhot ha-kokhavim* ('Calculation of the stellar motions').⁴¹ However, a scrutiny of the Latin terminology of chapter five of Part I reveals that the translator made frequent use of *honor*,⁴² a calque of *kavod*, used by Ibn Ezra in all his star lists to denote the

³⁵ See *Electiones*, ed. SELA, II vi 1:1–5 through II vi 29:1–2.

³⁶ See *Electiones*, ed. SELA, II vi 1:5.

³⁷ See *Electiones*, ed. SELA, II vi 2:1.

³⁸ The name *Sefer Mishpētei ha-'Olam*, for example, is used in the final canticle of Ibn Ezra's 'Olam I. See 'Olam I, ed. SELA, §70:8, p. 96–97.

³⁹ For references to the lunar mansions in the two versions of Ibn Ezra's *Sefer ha-'Olam*, see 'Olam I, ed. SELA, §62:1–5, p. 92–93; §63:1–3, p. 92–95; §63:10, p. 94–95; and 'Olam II, ed. SELA, §37:4, p. 180–181; §43:4, p. 184–185; §44:1–3, p. 184–185; §45:1–4, p. 184–185; §49:1–3, p. 188–189.

⁴⁰ See Part I, §5.2:1–28.

⁴¹ See above, fn. 22.

⁴² See Part I, §5.2:11, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19, 26.

magnitude of stars and never used by Abraham Bar Ḥiyya with this meaning.⁴³ So, either Ibn Ezra copied into 'Olam III this list of lunar mansions from Bar Ḥiyya's *Hešbon mahalakhot ha-kokhavim*, or, more plausibly, both Bar Ḥiyya and Ibn Ezra derived their lists from a common unknown Arabic source.

Further evidence of the existence of 'Olam III is provided by another future tense cross-reference about the great conjunctions from *Liber Nativitatum* (henceforth *Nativitates*), the Latin translation of the lost second version of Ibn Ezra's *Sefer ha-Moladot* (henceforth *Moladot* II) to certain <*Liber de*> *verbis iurium seculi*, which is also a literal Latin rendering of *Sefer Mishpetei ha-'Olam*, an alternative name for Ibn Ezra's *Sefer ha-'Olam*.⁴⁴ That Part I is in all likelihood a Latin translation of the lost 'Olam III is also indicated by the fact that, as shown above, the third and seventh chapters of Part I address the great conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter.

Since *Moladot* II was composed in 1158⁴⁵ and *Mivḥarim* III in 1158 or after,⁴⁶ and since 'Olam III is referred to from these two works by future tense cross-references, it emerges that the Hebrew source text behind Part I – i.e., the lost 'Olam III – was also composed in 1158 or after, in the last stage of Ibn Ezra's career, when Ibn Ezra resided in the region of London or Rouen.

To sum up: the hitherto unknown existence of 'Olam III is conclusively established by a future-tense cross-reference from *Mivḥarim* III, in which Ibn Ezra says that in the *Book of the Judgments of the World* he will explain « the shape of the mansions », and by the fact that neither 'Olam I or 'Olam II includes a complete list of the 28 lunar mansions nor any reference to « the shape of the mansions ». That Part I is a Latin translation of the lost 'Olam III is particularly implied (a) by the fact that each of the items in the first complete list of the 28 lunar mansions found in the fifth chapter of Part I is accompanied by a graphical representation of the asterisms of the corresponding lunar mansion, and also (b) by a note at the end of the second list of lunar mansions in which the translator acknowledges that the Hebrew original of the second list of lunar mansions, and presumably that of all of Part I, were composed by Abraham Ibn Ezra, (c) by that there are striking resemblances between the bulk of Part I and various parts of Abraham Ibn Ezra's work, and (d) by the repetitive use of *honor*, a calque of *kavod*, used by Ibn Ezra in all his star lists to denote the magnitude of a star. However, we can be rather

⁴³ See SELA, *Abraham Ibn Ezra's Introductions to Astrology*, p. 296–297.

⁴⁴ See *Nativitates*, ed. SELA, I i 3:9, p. 82–83: « Et hoc est necessarium scire maxime in verbis coniunctionum magnorum sicut explanabo in *Verbis Iurium Seculi* » = « <All> this is necessary to know, particularly regarding affaires related to the great conjunctions, as I will explain in the *Book of the Judgments of the World* ».

⁴⁵ See SELA, *Abraham Ibn Ezra Latinus on Nativities*, p. 43–45.

⁴⁶ The date of composition of *Mivḥarim* III follows from a past tense cross-reference in *Electiones* that unmistakably points to a chapter on elections in *Moladot* II. See *Electiones*, ed. SELA, I 7:3. Since *Moladot* II was composed in 1158, it follows that *Mivḥarim* III was composed in 1158 or after.

certain that Part I is not a complete Latin translation of 'Olam III. For one thing, the opening or closing canticles that characterize Ibn Ezra's astrological treatises, are absent from this Latin text. The size of this translation (only 3,700 words) is considerably shorter than that of any of Bate's other complete translations of Ibn Ezra's astrological works. Moreover, since we do not have the Hebrew original of 'Olam III, we cannot be certain that the seven chapters of Part I do not include additions or omissions made by copyists or translators in the transmission of 'Olam III. This applies particularly to the seventh chapter and to the horoscopes, which are without parallel in Ibn Ezra's work. In particular, as pointed out in section I.4 (see below p. 223), casting horoscopes for the entry of the Sun into Aries, stands in sharp contradiction to Abraham Ibn Ezra, who resorts to syzygy horoscopes only and strongly rejects the horoscope of the Sun's entry into Aries.

I.2. Astronomical Parameters in Part I, §6 and Their Connection with Ibn Ezra (C. Philipp E. Nothaft)

Between the chapter on lunar mansions (§5) and the summary of astronomical calculations for the year 1067 (§7), Part I inserts a discussion of the length of the solar year and the rate of precession, two closely interlinked parameters that were a major source of disharmony within the tradition of Graeco-Arabic astronomy. The discussion begins (§6.1:2) with the assertion that there was agreement among the ancients that a solar year lasts $365 \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{120}$ days, which is equivalent to 365 complete days with a rotational excess of 93° ($= [1/4 + 1/120] \times 360^\circ$). There is a clear parallel here between our text and Abraham Ibn Ezra's *Sefer ha-Moladot*, where this year length is attributed to the Indians (אנשי הודו).⁴⁷ The same is true of his *Liber de rationibus tabularum* (henceforth: LRT), which leads off its discussion of the solar year with an identical set of values, attributing it to the « wise men of India » (*sapientes Indie*).⁴⁸ Another attestation of this Indian year length appears in the anonymous text starting *Ptolomeus et multi sapientum* (c. 1145), which like the LRT was written to accompany Ibn Ezra's Tables of Pisa.⁴⁹ In the LRT, Ibn Ezra

⁴⁷ *Moladot*, ed. SELA, IV 1:1, p. 182.

⁴⁸ *Liber de rationibus tabularum*, ed. MILLAS VALLICROSA, p. 75: « Sapientes vero Indie secundum dies mundi, quos dies apellant dies de *Scindehind*, omnes in hoc consentiunt quod annus solaris, ultra fractionem quadrantis, 120^m partem diei continet, que est 5^a pars unius hore, et erit revolutio anni solaris cum augmento 3 graduum, et secundum indos composite sunt tabule Alcaurezmi et Abnezafar et Mezlane ».

⁴⁹ MS Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, McClean 165, fol. 67r: « Indi autem metiuntur annum solarem secundum stellas fixas, dicentes annum solis esse reditum de stella fixa ad eandem, utpote a stella fixa in initio signi Arietis ad eandem, vel a loco alto ad locum altum, et dicunt annum habere 365 dies et 6 horas et partem diei centesimam vicesimam ». Ibid., fol. 67v: « Unde secundum Ptolomeum minuitur ab anno Christianorum pars trecentesima et secundum Indos additur pars 120 ». This is Text II in RAYMOND MERCIER, « The Lost Zij of al-Šūfī in the Twelfth-

claims that the solar year of the Indians underlies tables drawn up by *Alcaurezmi*, *Abnezafar* and *Mezlame*.⁵⁰ The first of these names clearly refers to al-Khwārizmī, who in the first half of the ninth century adapted an earlier translation of astronomical tables from Sanskrit known as the *Zīj al-Sindhind*. Upon its arrival in al-Andalus, the Khwārizmīan version of the *Zīj al-Sindhind* was revised again by Maslama al-Majrītī (d. 1007/8) and his student Ibn al-Ṣaffār (d. 1035), who must be the other two individuals on Ibn Ezra's list.⁵¹ One of the tables in this set operates with a year length of $365\text{d } 6;12,9\text{h} = 365;15,30,22,30\text{d}$ and a rotational excess of $93;2,15^\circ$.⁵² If these values are rounded to $365\text{d } 6;12\text{h} = 365;15,30\text{d}$ and 93° respectively, the result is equivalent to the $365 \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{120}$ days mentioned in our text.⁵³

Century Tables for London and Pisa », in Id., *Studies on the Transmission of Medieval Mathematical Astronomy*, Ashgate, Aldershot 2004 (Variorum Collected Studies Series, 787), ch. 8, p. 15–16. A portion of this text also appears in MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Selden supra 26, fol. 122r–129v, 101r–105v (reversed quires). On the Tables of Pisa and their connection with Ibn Ezra, see MERCIER, « The Lost Zīj »; CHARLES BURNETT, « Abd al-Masīh of Winchester », in LODI NAUTA, ARJO VANDERJAGT (eds.), *Between Demonstration and Imagination: Essays in the History of Science and Philosophy Presented to John D. North*, Brill, Leiden 1999 (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 96), p. 159–169 (164–165); BURNETT, « Latin Alphanumerical Notation, and Annotation in Italian, in the Twelfth Century: MS London, British Library, Harley, 5402 », in MENSO FOLKERTS, RICHARD LORCH (eds.), *Sic itur ad astra: Studien zur Geschichte der Mathematik und Naturwissenschaften; Festschrift für den Arabisten Paul Kunitzsch zum 70. Geburtstag*, Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden 2000, p. 77–90 (78–81); BURNETT, « Indian Numerals in the Mediterranean Basin in the Twelfth Century, with Special Reference to the 'Eastern Forms' », in YVONNE DOLD-SAMPLONIUS, JOSEPH W. DAUBEN, MENSO FOLKERTS, BENNO VAN DALEN (eds.), *From China to Paris: 2000 Years Transmission of Mathematical Ideas*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 2002 (Boethius, 46), p. 237–288 (251); BURNETT, « The Transmission of Arabic Astronomy via Antioch and Pisa in the Second Quarter of the Twelfth Century », in JAN P. HOGENDIJK, ABDELHAMID I. SABRA (eds.), *The Enterprise of Science in Islam: New Perspectives*, MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass.) 2003, p. 23–51 (36–38).

⁵⁰ See fn. 48 above.

⁵¹ See OTTO NEUGEBAUER, *The Astronomical Tables of Al-Khwārizmī*, Munksgaard, København 1962 (Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, Historisk-filosofiske Skrifter, 4.2); RAYMOND MERCIER, « Astronomical Tables in the Twelfth Century », in CHARLES BURNETT (ed.), *Adelard of Bath: An English Scientist and Arabist of the Early Twelfth Century*, The Warburg Institute, London 1987 (Warburg Institute Surveys and Texts, 14), p. 87–118 (88–94); DAVID PINGREE, « Indian Astronomy in Medieval Spain », in JOSEP CASULLERAS, JULIO SAMSÓ (eds.), *From Baghdad to Barcelona: Studies in the Islamic Exact Sciences in Honour of Prof. Juan Vernet*, vol. I, Instituto « Millás Vallicrosa » de Historia de la Ciencia Árabe, Barcelona 1996, p. 39–48; DAVID A. KING, JULIO SAMSÓ, « Astronomical Handbooks and Tables from the Islamic World (750–1900): An Interim Report », *Suhayl*, 2 (2001), p. 9–105 (32–35, 56–57).

⁵² *Ezich Elkaurezmi* (trans. ADELARD OF BATH), in *Die astronomischen Tafeln des Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwārizmī in der Bearbeitung des Maslama ibn Aḥmed al-Madjrītī und der latein. Übersetzung des Athelhard von Bath*, ed. HEINRICH SUTER, A. F. HØST & SØN, København 1914 (Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, Skrifter, 7th Ser., Historisk og filosofisk Afd., 3.1), p. 230; NEUGEBAUER, *The Astronomical Tables*, p. 131.

⁵³ See on this point JULIO SAMSÓ, « 'Dixit Abraham Iudeus': algunas observaciones sobre los textos astronómicos latinos de Abraham Ibn 'Ezra », *Iberia Judaica*, 4 (2012), p. 171–200 (179).

In the LRT, the next estimate to be mentioned after the Indian one is that of the « wise men of the Persians », whom *Mescella* and *Albumazar* followed in constructing their tables. Their year is claimed to exceed $365 \frac{1}{4}$ days by $\frac{1}{115}$ of a day.⁵⁴ There is again a parallel passage in Ibn Ezra's *Sefer ha-Moladot*, where he equates the same « Persian » year length with a rotational excess of $93;15^\circ$.⁵⁵ These values are not strictly speaking compatible, as a year of $365 \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{115}$ days implies a rotational excess of $93;7,49\dots^\circ$ rather than $93;15^\circ$. The fact that our text states that the Persians added $0;15^\circ$ to the rotational excess of 93° implied by the Indian value (Part I, §6.1:3) hence strengthens its connection to Ibn Ezra.

Part I remains in lockstep with the LRT for the third value on the list (§6.1:4), which is Ptolemy's year of $365 \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{300}$ days with a rotational excess of $88;48^\circ$.⁵⁶ The author of our text expresses this excess as $90^\circ - 1;12^\circ$ but otherwise offers no information that would diverge from that given in the LRT. He then goes on to claim that astronomers subsequent to Ptolemy further decreased the year length to $365 \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{120}$ days (§6.1:5), which if compared to the Indian value of $365 \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{120}$ days would cause a discrepancy of one day in 60 years (§6.1:6). No year of $365 \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{120}$ days (= 365d 5;48h) is mentioned anywhere in the LRT, but it does crop up in the aforementioned *Ptolomeus et multi sapientum*, where it serves as a reckoning example in a detailed account of how to construct astronomical tables similar to the Tables of Pisa.⁵⁷ It is endorsed as the year of the « astronomers » in an anonymous text starting *Inter omnes recte philosophantes* (1169), which shows strong signs of being dependent on *Ptolomeus et multi sapientum*.⁵⁸ Even though this text gives the length of the tropical year as 365d 5;48h, which is the same as $365 \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{120}$ days, it treats it as equivalent to $365 \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{131}$ days, which is the approximate year length used in the Tables of Pisa.⁵⁹ It hence seems likely that the length of $365 \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{120}$ days, which is also cited in Latin computistical sources such as the *Compotus Petri* of 1171,⁶⁰ originated as a simplification of the Pisan value, which is equivalent to appr. 365d 5;49h (rather than 365d 5;48h). The relevant passage in Part I, §6.1:6, offers a slight hint as to what may have motivated such a

⁵⁴ *Liber de rationibus tabularum*, ed. MILLÁS VALLICROSA, p. 75, l. 7–9: « Sapientes vero persarum asserunt additamentum supra 4^{am} diei esse 115^m partem diei, et secundum eos Mescella et Albumazar suas tabulas composuerunt ».

⁵⁵ *Moladot*, ed. SELA, IV 1:2, p. 182.

⁵⁶ *Liber de rationibus tabularum*, ed. MILLÁS VALLICROSA, p. 75, l. 10–12: « [E]t Ptholomeus probavit illam fractionem minorem esse 4^a parte tantum quantum valet 300^{ma} pars unius diei, et erit anni revolutio secundum eum 88 graduum et 48 minutorum ».

⁵⁷ MS Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, McClean 165, fol. 68v–69r.

⁵⁸ This text has so far only been found in MS Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, 718–720, fol. 422v–423v (s. XIII/XIV).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 423r–v.

⁶⁰ See C. PHILIPP E. NOTHAFT, *Scandalous Error: Calendar Reform and Calendrical Astronomy in Medieval Europe*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2018, p. 97–98, 103, 121–125.

simplification in the present case: if the lowest estimate of the year is treated as a mirror image of the highest, such that $365 \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{120}$ days are pitted against the «Indian» value of $365 \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{120}$ days, then it becomes very easy to calculate that it will take 60 years for the discrepancy to amount to a full day.

Up to this point, our text has made no express distinction between values based on the sidereal year (i.e., those longer than $365 \frac{1}{4}$ days) and those representing the length of the tropical year (i.e., those shorter than $365 \frac{1}{4}$ days). This distinction is finally supplied in §6.3, while §6.4 follows up by remarking on the two definitions of the signs of the zodiac that result from it. At the very end we are told that the sidereal zodiac was invented by the Indians of old, who based themselves on the visible constellations (§6.4:3), which is a claim familiar from the LTR.⁶¹

Before we get there, however, the text first comments on the access-and-recess motion of the sphere of fixed stars, which is alleged to be an Indian invention (§6.2). We are told that there are two versions of this particular theory, depending on whether the amplitude of precession is taken to be 8° or $10;45^\circ$ (§6.2:2–4).⁶² The same information appears in the LRT, where Ibn Ezra asserts that the access-and-recess theory was derided by Ptolemy and all the *magistri probationum*.⁶³ By writing *sed hoc nichil est* (§6.2:5), our text implicitly agrees with these astronomers that the theory imagined by the Indians fails to correspond to reality.

The text goes on to assert that Ptolemy's date of the vernal equinox in his own day fell eight days later than the Sun's entry into Aries according to the Indians, which is hence implied to be a sidereal sign-entry (§6.2:6). We are further told that, in present times, the equinox is nine days ahead of the Indian calculation (§6.2:8). A parallel passage in the LRT can be identified, although here the difference at the time of Ptolemy is said to have been seven, not eight, days. The LRT text is also clearer in stating that the Indian sign-entry was calculated using the *tabulae Indorum*.⁶⁴ According to the tables of al-Khwārizmī, the true Sun reached the first

⁶¹ *Liber de rationibus tabularum*, ed. MILLÁS VALLICROSA, p. 83, l. 24–p. 84, l. 4; p. 85, l. 5–15. Further such passages occur in *Ptolomeus et multi sapientum*, MS Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, McClean 165, fol. 67r; *Inter omnes recte philosophantes*, MS Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, 718–720, fol. 423v.

⁶² For more information on these parameters, see C. PHILIPP E. NOTHAFT, *Walcher of Malvern: 'De lunationibus' and 'De Dracone'; Study, Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, Brepols, Turnhout 2017 (De Diversis Artibus, 101 [N.S. 64]), p. 285–290; NOTHAFT, «Ptolemaic Orbs in Twelfth-Century England: A Study and Edition of the Anonymous *Liber de motibus planetarum*», *Mediterranea*, 3 (2018), p. 145–210 (157–161); NOTHAFT, *Scandalous Error*, p. 100–101.

⁶³ *Liber de rationibus tabularum*, ed. MILLÁS VALLICROSA, p. 77, l. 3–11. On the *magistri probationum*, see SAMSÓ, «'Dixit Abraham Iudeus'», p. 193–195.

⁶⁴ *Liber de rationibus tabularum*, ed. MILLÁS VALLICROSA, p. 81, l. 20–28: «Nam si quis velit coequare planetas in tabulis indorum secundum tempus Ptholomei, inveniet solem intrasse caput arietis 7 diebus ante illum diem in quo intrare Ptholomeus probavit illum. Si autem velimus equare solem cum intrat caput arietis secundum magistros probationum vel cum alibi est in nostro tempore, inveniemus eum intrare caput arietis 9 diebus ante illum diem in quo secundum tabulas indorum

degree of Aries on 14 March in AD 140 (i.e., in Ptolemy's day) and on 23 March in AD 1154, which is the *annus praesens* of the LRT. It is worth comparing these data-points with a passage in *Ptolomeus et multi sapientum*, which puts the present-day equinox on 14 March, as would have been correct for most of the middle years of the twelfth century. It also gives the corresponding Indian sign-entry on 23 March while claiming that the dates were exactly reversed in Ptolemy's day (vernal equinox on 23 March and Indian sign-entry on 14 March).⁶⁵ This statement clashes with Ptolemy's *Almagest* (III.1), which records the vernal equinox of AD 140 for 22 March rather than 23 March, as do the corresponding astronomical tables. In our text, by contrast, the discrepancy between Ptolemy and the Indians is said to be eight days, exactly the interval one could find by comparing the *Almagest* and al-Khwārizmī's tables.

Commenting on the divide between users of a tropical reference frame and those preferring sidereal coordinates, the text (§6.3:4) cites three different estimates for the linear rate of precession: $1^\circ/100y$, $1^\circ/70y$, and 1° in 66 years and 8 months. A very similar array of values appears in the LRT, where we are told that Ptolemy postulated a motion of 1° every 100 years, whereas al-Battānī showed it to be $1^\circ/66y$ and al-Šūfī later claimed it was $1^\circ/70y$.⁶⁶ Our text renders the second of these three values more precise, giving it as 1° in 66 years and 8 months, which is the same as $1^\circ/66;40y$. It is the exact value one can derive from another statement in the LRT according to which the total period of precession is 24,000 years ($24,000 \div 360 = 66;40$).⁶⁷

In §6.3:5 one is told that the length of the anomalistic year (*a puncto ad eundem punctum*) is the same as the sidereal year, since the precession of the apogee is equivalent to that of the fixed stars. This statement fully conforms to Ibn Ezra's

intrare inveniatur, et hoc quidem negari non potest cum possit fieri huius rei manifestatio et per astrolabium et per umbram ». See also *ibid.*, p. 86, l. 11–19; *‘Olam I*, ed. SELA, §11:3, p. 58; *‘Olam II*, ed. SELA, §45:4, p. 184; Ibn al-Muthannā, *Commentary on the Astronomical Tables of al-Khwārizmī* (trans. Abraham Ibn Ezra), in *Ibn al-Muthannā's Commentary on the Astronomical Tables of al-Khwārizmī*, trans. BERNARD R. GOLDSTEIN, Yale University Press, New Haven (Conn.) 1967, p. 149, l. 31–32.

⁶⁵ MS Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, McClean 165, fol. 67v: « Ex his predictis nichilominus patet ratio secundum quam in diebus Ptolomei cum sol intraret capud Arietis, scilicet iuncturam in lineam equinoctialem, <erat> [ms. et] in 23 diebus Martii, secundum Indos in 14 die Martii intrasse inveniretur, nunc econverso secundum rationem Ptolomei inveniatur sol intrare capud Arietis 14 die Martii, secundum Indos in 23 die Martii, quia Ptolomeus secundum iuncturam, Indi secundum stellam firmam annum faciunt. [...] Hinc itaque est quod secundum Ptolomeum, cum in anno Christianorum sol intret Arietem presenti tempore 14 die Martii, post intervalla annorum intrabit 13, deinde 12 die Martii, et cum secundum Indos intret sol presenti tempore 23 Martii in anno Christianorum, post temporis cursum magnum intrabit 24, et deinceps ».

⁶⁶ *Liber de rationibus tabularum*, ed. MILLÁS VALLICROSA, p. 78, l. 6–10; SAMSÓ, « 'Dixit Abraham Iudeus' », p. 181.

⁶⁷ *Liber de rationibus tabularum*, ed. MILLÁS VALLICROSA, p. 81, l. 16–17.

opinion, as recorded in the LRT.⁶⁸ What follows is a rough calculation of the length of the sidereal year implicit in Ptolemy's rate of precession (§6.3:7–10), which is again effectively the same as that in the LRT.⁶⁹

The text's dependence on the LRT is less straightforward in the remainder of the discussion, which continues by attributing to the « wise men of the Saracens » a precession rate of $1^\circ/66y$ with a corresponding rotational excess of $5;27^\circ$ (§6.3:11). In the LRT, this set of values is associated with al-Battānī's tropical year of $365 \frac{1}{4} - 1/106$ days and a rotational excess of $90^\circ - 3;24^\circ = 86;36^\circ$,⁷⁰ whereas our text (§6.3:12–13) states that the Saracens chose a length of $365 \frac{1}{4} - 1/115$ days and a rotational excess of $90^\circ - 3;13^\circ = 86;47^\circ$. These numbers fail to add up, however, as the rotational equivalent of $1/115^{\text{th}}$ of a day should have been $3;7,49\dots^\circ$. Accepting the $3;13^\circ$ in our text, which are confirmed by the $2;24^\circ$ in §6.3:13 (since $3;13^\circ + 2;24^\circ = 5;27^\circ$), one arrives at a year length of $365 \frac{1}{4} - 1/112$ days, which suggests that the number 115 in MS V was an error for 112. With this conjecture in place, the year length stated in §6.3:12 comes extremely close to the solar parameter used in Henry Bate's Tables of Mechelen, which implies a tropical year of $365d \ 5;47,8,57,20\dots d = 365 \frac{1}{4} - 1/111.99\dots$ days.⁷¹ In light of Bate's involvement in rendering the tripartite text into Latin, this is unlikely to be a complete coincidence. At the same time, it remains an open question whether the $3;13^\circ$ and $1/112^{\text{th}}$ of a day were an original element of our text. An interpolation on Bate's part seems equally possible, especially considering that a solar year of $365 \frac{1}{4} - 1/112$ days is not otherwise attested in Abraham Ibn Ezra's written work.

The third precession rate to receive its concomitant tropical year in §6 is $1^\circ/70y$, which corresponds to a fractional excess of $5;8,34\dots^\circ$ or roughly $5;9^\circ$, as stated both here (§6.3:14) and in the LRT.⁷² Our text links this value to a larger group of Arabic astronomers, the aforementioned *magistri probationum*, whose tropical year is equivalent to 365 complete days and a rotational excess of $90^\circ - 2;45^\circ = 87;15^\circ$ (§6.3:14). Converted into fractions of a day, this yields a tropical year of $365 \frac{1}{4} - 1/130.909090\dots$ days or very nearly $365 \frac{1}{4} - 1/131$ days. The result approximates the year length implicit in the Tables of Pisa, which is $365d \ 5;49,2,33,49\dots h = 365 \frac{1}{4} - 1/131.4\dots$ days. A rounded value of $365d \ 5;49h = 365 \frac{1}{4} - 1/131$ days is in fact repeatedly endorsed in the Hebrew works of Abraham Ibn Ezra, for example in the first version of the *Sefer ha-'Olam* I, where it is labelled « the correct value for our era ».⁷³

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 79, l. 21–p. 80, l. 21. See SAMSÓ, « 'Dixit Abraham Iudeus' », p. 182–184.

⁶⁹ *Liber de rationibus tabularum*, ed. MILLÁS VALLICROSA, p. 82, l. 16–29.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 83, l. 1–7.

⁷¹ C. PHILIPP E. NOTHAFT, « Henry Bate's *Tabule Machlinenses*: The Earliest Astronomical Tables by a Latin Author », *Annals of Science*, 75 (2018), p. 275–303 (290–297).

⁷² *Liber de rationibus tabularum*, ed. MILLÁS VALLICROSA, p. 83, l. 15–17.

⁷³ 'Olam I, ed. SELA, §17:9, p. 62–63. See also *Te'amim* I, ed. SELA, §2.12:5, p. 50; *Te'amim* II, ed. SELA, §6.3, p. 238; §8.2, p. 250; *Moladot*, ed. SELA, IV 1:9, 4.2, p. 184; *Tequfah*, ed. SELA, §1:3, 2:2, p. 372.

A different picture emerges from the LRT, where the precession rate of $1^\circ/70y$ is instead associated with a tropical year of $365 + 87;21/90 = 365 \frac{1}{4} - 1/135.8...$ days, which was supposedly championed by Islamic astronomers such as Ibn Yunus, al-Šūfī, Azarquiel, and Ibn Sina.⁷⁴ The text also makes the surprising assertion that the astronomical tables described in it, that is, the Tables of Pisa, assume a tropical year of $365 \frac{1}{4} - 1/136$ days « according to the observation of al-Šūfī, Ibn Sina, and Azarquiel ».⁷⁵ For this year length to result from a precession rate of $1^\circ/70y$, the rotational excess of the corresponding sidereal year would have to be approximately $87;21^\circ + 5;9^\circ = 92;30^\circ$, as is indeed noted in the LRT.⁷⁶ This translates into a sidereal year of $365 \frac{1}{4} + 1/144$ days. By contrast, the tropical year of $365 \frac{1}{4} - 1/131$ days assumed in our text and in other sources connected to the Tables of Pisa will result if the rate of $1^\circ/70y$ is applied to a sidereal year of $365 \frac{1}{4} + 1/150$ days (rotational excess of $92;24^\circ$). The LRT and our text (§6.3:10, 15) agree in tracing this value back to Ptolemy.⁷⁷

I.3. The Tables of Winchester in Part I, §7 (C. Philipp E. Nothafft)

I.3.1. General remarks

In the final chapter of Part I, the author spells out the results as well as some of the intermediary steps of astronomical calculations he performed with a set of tables of his own making (see the reference to *tabulas quas ego composui* in §7.1:14). Their meridian of reference is revealed most clearly in his account of how he calculated the time of the vernal equinox of AD 1067 (§7.1:3–12). Having used the tables to find the Sun's mean motion in 1066 years, he adjusted this result to the meridian of Arin (Ujjain in India), which medieval astronomers assumed to lie on the equator and on the prime meridian that marked the « middle of the world » (§7.1:4).⁷⁸ He

⁷⁴ *Liber de rationibus tabularum*, ed. MILLÁS VALLICROSA, p. 83, l. 9–15.

⁷⁵ *Liber de rationibus tabularum*, ed. MILLÁS VALLICROSA, p. 95, l. 12–15: « Superius ergo docuimus quod secundum rationem harum tabularum annus 365 dies continet et quartam, centesimam sextam partem diei minus, et hoc secundum probationem Azofi et Abencinne et Acerchel ». The year length given in the edition must be emended to $365 \frac{1}{4} - 1/136$ days, as found in MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 40, fol. 61r (s. XII^{2/2}): « ... annus 365 dies continet et quartam centesimam 36^{ta} parte [sic] diei minus ». See the discussion in G. J. TOOMER, « The Solar Theory of az-Zarqāl: A History of Errors », *Centaurus*, 14 (1969), p. 306–336 (317–319).

⁷⁶ *Liber de rationibus tabularum*, ed. MILLÁS VALLICROSA, p. 83, l. 17.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 82, l. 23–29.

⁷⁸ On the position of Arin, see IBN AL-MUTHANNĀ, *Commentary on the Astronomical Tables of al-Khwārizmī* (trans. Abraham Ibn Ezra), trans. GOLDSTEIN, p. 147, l. 27–p. 148, l. 1; PETRUS ALFONSI, *Dialogus*, vol. I, ed. CARMEN CARDELLE DE HARTMANN, DARKO SENEKOVIC, THOMAS ZIEGLER, and PETER STOTZ, SISMEL Edizioni del Galluzzo, Florence 2018, p. 30–40 (tit. 1.36–71); RAYMOND DE MARSEILLE, *Liber cursuum planetarum*, in *Opera omnia*, vol. I, ed. MARIE-THÉRÈSE D'ALVERNY, CHARLES BURNETT, EMMANUEL POULLE,

did so by lowering the original value by 0;11,40°, which approximates the mean solar motion for the time difference between Winchester and Arin (§7.1:4–5). The author is explicit in naming Winchester as his present location (§7.1:12) and references the city again at the end of this section, where he notes the ascendant degree at the lunisolar opposition of 26 August 1067 (§7.1:22). Since the only other place mentioned in this chapter is Arin, it seems very likely that all of the computational results presented in it were derived from the same set of tables for the coordinates of Winchester.

The use of Winchester tables in Part I of our text may explain a reference in Henry Bate's undated treatise on the *equatorium*, in which tables for Winchester are listed alongside the Tables of Pisa as examples of astronomical tables cast for tropical longitudes in the ninth sphere. From the way the text mentions the two sets immediately after the tables of « Abraham » it appears that Bate intended to classify them both as works by Abraham Ibn Ezra or *Abraham Iudeus*.⁷⁹ Bate knew about Ibn Ezra's authorship of the Tables of Pisa from the *Liber de rationibus tabularum*, which had been written to elucidate the tables in question.⁸⁰ That he was directly familiar with the Tables of Pisa is evident from his own tables for the meridian of Mechelen, which follow the same structural outlines. In one of the

CNRS Éditions, Paris 2009 (Sources d'Histoire Médiévale, 40), p. 172 (I.62a–63a), 184 (I.82b), 200 (II.1a, 1d), 204 (II.3a); *Ezich Elkaurezmi* (trans. Adelard of Bath), ed. SUTER, p. 1; ADELARD OF BATH, *De opere astrolapsus*, in BRUCE GEORGE DICKEY, « Adelard of Bath: An Examination Based on heretofore Unexamined Manuscripts », Ph.D. Diss., University of Toronto 1982, p. 164–165; HERMANN OF CARINTHIA, *De essentiis*, ed. CHARLES BURNETT, Brill, Leiden 1982 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 15), p. 214, l. 22–24 (bk. II, 77rD); 216, l. 5–10 (bk. II, 77rF); *The Toledan Tables*, ed. FRITZ S. PEDERSEN, 4 vols., C. A. Reitzel, København 2002 (Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, Historisk-filosofiske Skrifter, 24.1–4), vol. I, p. 250 (Ca82); vol. II, p. 430 (Cb133), 730 (CcD133); vol. III, p. 1191–1197; *Theorica planetarum Gerardi*, ed. FRANCIS J. CARMODY, Berkeley (Ca.) 1942, p. 45 (c. 8, §106); ROLANDO A. LAGUARDA TRIAS, *La ciencia española en el descubrimiento de America (las tablas de coordenadas geográficas compiladas en la España medieval)*, Casa-Museo de Colon y Seminario Americanista de la Universidad de Valladolid, Valladolid 1990 (Cuadernos Colombinos, 16), p. 23–25.

⁷⁹ HENRY BATE, *Equatorium planetarum*, in *Opusculum Abrahe Iudei de nativitatibus cum exemplaribus figuris singulis domibus antepositis: Et magistralis compositio astrolabii Hanrici Bate*, Erhardus Ratdolt, Venice 1485, sig. d4r–v: « Ptholomeus vero: et Geber: Albategni: Abrahamque Iudeus: et Açophius, ceteri quoque magistri probationum et maxime orientales astronomi motus planetarum secundum nonam speram considerantes radices suas super hoc fundaverunt: et hoc patet in tabulis Ptholomei: Albategni et Abrahe: in tabulis Pisanis, Wintoniensibus et aliis ». See BURNETT, « Abd al-Masīh of Winchester », p. 163–164, 166.

⁸⁰ See the quotation from the *Liber de opere tabularum* by Abraham Iudeus in HENRY BATE, *Speculum divinatorum et quorundam naturalium*, XX.17, ed. CARLOS STEEL, GUY GULDENTOPS, Leuven University Press, Leuven 1996 (Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, De Wulf-Mansion Centre, Series 1, 23), p. 337. See, in addition, the reference to Abraham and his *Tractatus de motibus et opere tabularum* in the introduction to ABRAHAM IBN EZRA, *De revolutionibus* (trans. Henry Bate), in *Abrahe Avenaris Iudei Astrologi peritissimi in re iudiciali opera: ab excellentissimo philosopho Petro de Abano post accuratam castigationem in Latinum traducta*, Petrus Liechtenstein, Venice 1507, fol. 77va.

manuscripts, the Tables of Mechelen incorporate a second table for the mean anomaly of Mercury « according to Abraham Ibn Ezra » (*secundum Abraham Evenzare*), whose underlying parameter is that of the Pisan tables.⁸¹ Given Bate's role in translating our tripartite text into Latin, it may well be the case that his information concerning the parallel existence of Winchester tables came entirely from this one text and that he ascribed the tables to Ibn Ezra on its basis.

The hypothesis of Ibn Ezra's authorship seems to receive support from a marginal note added to a mid-thirteenth century copy of the Toledan Tables, which had been translated from Arabic into Latin in the twelfth century.⁸² In the top-left corner next to the standard tables for the Sun's mean motion, the annotator placed the following comment:

Know that the tables of the Sun's mean motion made by Abraham for the meridian of Winchester precede these tables by the mean motion of 9 days and 12 hours and 12 minutes of the hour. These same [tables] precede the tables made according to [the meridian of] Angers by 50 minutes of the hour.⁸³

Another gloss on the same page tells us to add 9;22,15° to any mean longitude extracted from the present solar tables.⁸⁴ It is clearly related to the previous remark, since 9;22,15° is the solar mean motion in 9d 12;12h if the rate of motion is taken to be 0;59,8°/d (the mean solar motion in the Toledan Tables is 0;59,8,11,28,27°/d, that in the Tables of Pisa is 0;59,8,19,42,45,5°/d). Analogous notes instructing users to add a certain amount to the radices in a given collected-year table also appear in the margins of other pages of this manuscript.⁸⁵ The full set of suggested additions is as follows:

Sun	+9;22,15°
Moon	+11;50°
Moon (arg.)	+11;50°
Saturn	+9;24°
Jupiter	+10;33,43°
Mars	+7;52,22°
Venus (arg.)	+0;24°
Mercury (arg.)	+7;48°

⁸¹ NOTHAFT, « Henry Bate's *Tabule Machlinenses* », p. 283.

⁸² See *The Toledan Tables*, ed. PEDERSEN.

⁸³ MS Cambridge, University Library, Kk.1.1, fol. 145v: « Scito quod tabule mediorum cursuum solis ad meridiem Winconiensis ab Abrahamo condite precedunt has tabulas mediis cursibus 9 dierum et 12 horarum et 12 minutorum hore. Ille eedem precedunt tabulas secundum Andegavum factas 50 minutis hore ».

⁸⁴ Ibid.: « Adde cuilibet medio cursui de hac tabula mediorum cursuum solis extracto 9 gradus, 22 minuta, 15 secundas ».

⁸⁵ Ibid., fol. 146r, 147v, 148v, 149r, 150r, 150v, 151v.

Dragon

+4°

One hallmark of the Toledan Tables is their use of a sidereal frame of reference, which necessitates applying the so-called « equation of the eighth sphere » if tropical longitudes are sought. According to the access-and-recess model of variable precession inherent in these tables, the value of this « equation » was slightly more than 9° at the beginning of AD 1250. The recommended additions to the radices of the Sun (9;22,15°) and most other planets (between 7;48° and 11;50°) are hence broadly consistent with the claim, made by Henry Bate, that the Tables of Winchester were cast for tropical longitudes. What makes these glosses rather puzzling, however, is their failure to specify a date at which the stated addition is supposed to be valid. Instead, the gloss next to the solar tables is explicit in treating it as a constant that applies to any mean longitude calculated from these tables.⁸⁶ For this to make sense, the Toledan Tables and Abraham's Winchester tables would have to be based on the same parameters, allowing the differences between their cyclical radices to remain constant over time. This cannot have been the case, however, if the Tables of Winchester used a tropical year, as they clearly did (see below).

Of the various known texts either written by Abraham Ibn Ezra himself or somehow derived from his works, the only one to mention the meridian of Winchester is the *Tractatus Magistri Habrahe de tabulis planetarum*, which is effectively a type of canons to the Tables of Pisa.⁸⁷ The longitude of Pisa is here given as 33° from the western prime meridian and contrasted with the joint longitude of Angers and Winchester, which is said to be 24°.⁸⁸ There is an obvious affinity between this passage and another one contained in Ibn Ezra's *Liber de rationibus tabularum*, which fully agrees with the *Tractatus Magistri Abrahe* as far as the coordinates of Pisa and Angers are concerned.⁸⁹ At the same time, one notices a tension between this *Tractatus* and §7 of Part I in our tripartite text, where Winchester is placed 19° east of the western prime meridian (rather than 24°) and 71° west of the city of Arin (§7.1:4). The same longitude is assigned to Winchester in a note accompanying the astronomical tables of al-Khwārizmī (in the version translated by Petrus Alfonsi) in MS Oxford, Corpus Christi College, 283 (s. XII).⁹⁰ It

⁸⁶ See fn. 84.

⁸⁷ This is Text III in MERCIER, « The Lost Zij », p. 16–17.

⁸⁸ See MS London, British Library, Arundel 377, fol. 56va, which is quoted in *Liber de rationibus tabularum*, ed. MILLÁS VALLICROSA, p. 61.

⁸⁹ *Liber de rationibus tabularum*, ed. MILLÁS VALLICROSA, p. 87, l. 20–21; p. 88, l. 13–14. Note that the printed edition gives the longitude of Angers as 23°, which is inconsistent with the stated time difference of 0;36h (= 9°) between Pisa and Angers. The correct reading of 24° is attested in MS Erfurt, Universitäts- und Forschungsbibliothek, Dep. Erf. CA 4° 381, fol. 4v (s. XII^{2/2}).

⁹⁰ NEUGEBAUER, *The Astronomical Tables*, p. 229–230; JOHN D. NORTH, « The Longitudes of Winchester », *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-Âge Grec et Latin*, 73 (2002), p. 13–20 (15); PATRICK GAUTIER DALCHÉ, « La

is attested, moreover, as the longitude of London in one of the headings to the Tables of London, as found in MS London, British Library, Arundel 377, fols. 7v–35r (s. XII/XIII), which is the same manuscript that transmits the *Tractatus Magistri Habrahe*. The collected-year table for the mean Sun is here introduced as follows:

The mean motion of the Sun according to years of the Lord for London, whose longitude is 19 degrees.⁹¹

The Tables of London are known to be an adaptation of the Tables of Pisa, yet their relation to these original tables is unusually complicated. When John D. North compared the radices of both sets for an article published in 2002, he found that values in the London tables for the Moon, Mars, Venus, and Mercury are broadly consistent with the hypothesis that the original meridian was shifted by approximately 14°, which is what one might expect from a redactor who placed London at 19° from the western meridian and Pisa at 33°. It turned out to be different for the Sun's radices, where the « inferred longitude difference [...] is close to 8°; and for the lunar tables it is close to 9° ».⁹² While the latter conclusion is difficult to verify owing to North's silence on the details of his calculations as well as to signs of corruption in the extant copies of the Pisan tables,⁹³ his finding for the Sun is clearly sound. Applying the precise rate of mean motion implicit in the Pisan tables (0;59,8,19,42,45,5°/d) to the increase of 0;1,28° exhibited by the radices of the London Tables will indeed indicate a longitudinal shift of c.8°. It should not be excluded, however, that the redactor of the London tables employed a simplified value of 0;59,8°/d, as displayed in the first line of the table for the daily mean motion.⁹⁴ If it was his intention to shift the meridian by 9°, as per the distance between Angers/Winchester (24°) and Pisa (33°) assumed in the *Tractatus Magistri Habrahe*,⁹⁵ a rate of 0;59,8°/d would have mandated increasing the radices by 0;1,28,42°. It hence seems perfectly possible that the redactor proceeded in this way and simply ignored sexagesimal thirds.

It seems clear, in any case, that the surviving version of the Tables of London was not cast for a unified meridian. North accounted for this strange state of affairs by proposing that Abraham Ibn Ezra, following his arrival in England, initially

Terre dans le cosmos », in Id. (ed.), *La Terre: connaissance, représentations, mesure au Moyen Âge*, Brepols, Turnhout 2013 (L'Atelier du Médiéviste, 13), p. 161–257 (236, 238, 240).

⁹¹ MS London, British Library, Arundel 377, fol. 7v: « Medius cursus solis ad annos Domini collectos super Londonias quarum longitudo est XIX graduum ».

⁹² NORTH, « The Longitudes of Winchester », p. 18.

⁹³ See MERCIER, « The Lost Zij », p. 4, 24–25, were the Pisan values for the lunar anomaly are emended on the assumption that the London radices were based on a meridian-shift of 14°.

⁹⁴ See, e.g., the copy of the Tables of Pisa in MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 3119, fol. 2r.

⁹⁵ See fn. 88 above.

adapted his Tables of Pisa to the meridian of Winchester but subsequently « underwent a change of mind » about its longitude as well as that of London, leading him to revise some of the mean-motion tables.⁹⁶ When North presented this hypothesis in 2002, he was already aware of the Middle English translation of our tripartite text in MS *L* (see section III below), treating it as an indirect witness to Ibn Ezra's lost Tables of Winchester and their original reference meridian 14° west of Pisa.⁹⁷ He withdrew from this position in an article published in 2003, in which he argued that the planetary positions mentioned in this text had been computed on the basis of some version of the Toledan Tables rather than a cognate of the Tables of Pisa. The clearly stated implication of this finding was that the calculations were not made by Abraham Ibn Ezra, but by « a different Winchester astronomer ».⁹⁸

A major deficit of North's study is that he carried it out on the sole basis of *L*, which leaves out crucial information found only in the Latin version contained in *V*. In §1.5 of chapter 7, this version offers a very strong *prima facie* reason for drawing a connection between the Winchester tables used by the author and Ibn Ezra's Tables of Pisa: the way the mean solar longitude on 1 March AD 1067 is expressed as a combination of 1049 collected and 17 expanded years. This style of presentation is alien to the Toledan Tables, at least in their standard version (which is based on the Arabic calendar), but it would have appeared natural to a user of the Tables of Pisa, which are based on collected-year cycles of 20 years. In its original state, the table of collected years began with AD 1029 (completed), such that the second radix was valid for 1049 (completed).⁹⁹ To find the mean longitude on 1 March 1067, one had to add to this radix the entry for 17 years in the adjacent table of expanded years, exactly as indicated in our text. This parallel can hardly be a coincidence, as there is no other set of astronomical tables from the Latin Middle Ages that exhibits the combination of structural features indicated here, i.e., a beginning of the year on 1 March and the use of collected-year radices spaced by 20 years, with one of the radices valid for 1049 completed years of the Christian era.

That the mean longitudes contained in these tables were tropical rather than sidereal is abundantly clear from the way the calculation summarized in §7.1:5–12 involved no equation of the eighth sphere, which would have been a necessary step for users of the Toledan Tables intent on finding the time of the vernal

⁹⁶ NORTH, « The Longitudes of Winchester », p. 19.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13–14, 19–20.

⁹⁸ JOHN D. NORTH, « Winchester 1067 », *Centaurus*, 45 (2003), p. 130–141 (136).

⁹⁹ That the collected-year tables in the Tables of Pisa began with 1029 (completed) is confirmed by the text *Ptolomeus et multi sapientum*, as found in MS Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, McClean 165, fol. 70r. A version of the tables matching this description appears in MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 3119, fol. 1v–42r.

equinox. The same conclusion can be drawn from the author's approach to deriving the solar equation, for which purpose he adjusted the position of the solar apogee to the year 1067. His starting point was a value of $86;14^\circ$ for the year 1100, which was recorded in his tables. From this he subtracted $0;28^\circ$ to find the corresponding value for 1067, which was $85;46^\circ$ (§7.1:7). Such an operation has no place in the Toledan Tables' sidereal frame of reference, as there the apogees remain fixed at the same longitude.

In contrast to the mean-motion tables for Winchester, which seem to have disappeared, the source the author used to adjust the solar apogee still survives in some twelfth- and thirteenth-century astronomical manuscripts. It is a list of planetary apogees for AD 1100 (completed) accompanied by precession tables that could be used to adjust this value to other years of the Christian era.¹⁰⁰ The tables assume an increase in apogeal longitude of $0;0,51^\circ$ per year, which would yield $0;28,3^\circ$ for a 33-year period. Our author probably performed the same calculation, but then disregarded the sexagesimal seconds. Implicit in this calculation is a precession rate of $1^\circ/70y$, the value that our text associates with the tropical year of $365 \frac{1}{4} - 1/131$ days employed by the Tables of Pisa (§7.3:14). The nexus between this particular precession value and the Tables of Pisa is preserved in MS København, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Gks 277 2° (s. XIII), where Ibn Ezra's tables (fols. 183v–190v) are preceded by a list of apogees for 1254 (fol. 183rb).¹⁰¹ The apogeal longitude of the Sun is here $2;10^\circ$ higher than the familiar value for 1100 ($2s\ 28;24^\circ$ vs. $2s\ 26;14^\circ$), which agrees perfectly with an increase of $0;0,51^\circ/y$ over the 154 years from 1100 to 1254, provided that sexagesimal seconds are ignored ($0;0,51^\circ \times 154 = 2;10,54^\circ$). That the apogees are supposed to increase at this rate is confirmed by the canons attached to the Pisan tables in the same manuscript, which also allege that the solar apogee's position in 1248 was $2s\ 28;20^\circ$.¹⁰² This is $2;6^\circ$ higher than the value for 1100, in good agreement with the fact that a precession of $0;0,51^\circ/y$ would produce an increase of $2;5,48^\circ$ over 148 years.

¹⁰⁰ I have seen the following copies: MSS Cambridge, University Library, Kk.1.1, fol. 171v; Cambridge, University Library, Mm.3.11, fol. 104v; Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Conv. soppr. J.V.6, fol. 83v; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Savile 22, fol. 76r, 79r. See also *The Toledan Tables*, ed. PEDERSEN, vol. III, p. 1226–1227. Note that MS Erfurt, Universitäts- und Forschungsbibliothek, Dep. Erf. CA 4° 364, fol. 102v, which is among the witnesses listed in this edition, shows a different set of apogeal values.

¹⁰¹ On the Tables of Pisa in this manuscript, see FRITZ S. PEDERSEN, « Astronomical Tables for Pisa in Ms. København K.B., Gks 277, Fol », *Renaissanceforum*, 3 (2007), p. 1–16.

¹⁰² MS København, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Gks 277 2°, fol. 192vb: « A medio motu planete subtrahe augem eius, qui aux crescit omni anno 51 secundis. Anno autem domini M°.CC.XLVIII fuit aux solis 2 signa, 28 minuta, 20 secunda ».

I.3.2. An ascension table for Winchester

Computing the position of the solar apogee was one of the stepping stones towards the author's conclusion that the vernal equinox of the year 1067 occurred at 19;34h in the middle of the world (Arin), but at 14;50h at the meridian of Winchester. The concomitant ascendant degrees were, according to him, 25;24° and 279;43° (§7.1:12). It is possible to infer from this information the assumed geographic latitude (φ) of Winchester via the ascensional difference (γ), using the relation

$$\gamma = \arcsin (\tan \delta \times \tan \varphi).^{103}$$

The third variable in this relation is δ , the declination of the relevant degree of ecliptic longitude (λ), which is sensitive to the assumed value for the obliquity of the ecliptic (ϵ), as per

$$\delta = \arcsin (\sin \lambda \times \sin \epsilon).^{104}$$

To find the ascensional difference, the oblique ascension stated in our text must be subtracted from the corresponding right ascension, α , which is most handily derived via the formula

$$\alpha = \arctan (\cos \epsilon \times \tan \lambda).^{105}$$

Values for ϵ known in twelfth-century Latin Europe include Ptolemy's 23;51,20°, al-Battānī's 23;35°, and the 23;33,30° assumed in the Toledan Tables. To these one may add a value of 23;33,8° first determined by Azarquiel and later also accepted by Abraham Ibn Ezra.¹⁰⁶ Using these four values in turn, I obtain the four sets of parameters shown in Tab. 1 below. It lists the corresponding right ascension (α) and two variants of the inferred latitude, depending on whether one uses the oblique ascension of 312° explicitly mentioned in §7.1:12 (φ_1) or the 312;30° that follow from the stated time (φ_2). All values are rounded to the nearest minute.

¹⁰³ JOSÉ CHABÁS, BERNARD R. GOLDSTEIN, *A Survey of European Astronomical Tables in the Late Middle Ages*, Brill, Leiden 2012 (Time, Astronomy, and Calendars: Texts and Studies, 2), p. 29.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 23; BERNARD R. GOLDSTEIN, *The Astronomical Tables of Levi ben Gerson*, Archon Books, Hamden (Conn.) 1974 (Transactions of The Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 45), p. 96; GEORGE SALIBA, « Critiques of Ptolemaic Astronomy in Islamic Spain », *Al-Qanṭara*, 20 (1999), p. 3–25 (11). Tables for the solar equation and declination with a maximum declination of 23;33,8° appear among the Tables of Pisa in MSS København, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Gks 277 2°, fol. 183v–184r and Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 3119, fol. 10r–12v. Another instance among Latin tables is noted in *The Toledan Tables*, ed. PEDERSEN, vol. III, p. 967.

ϵ	α	φ_1	φ_2
23;51,20°	280;36°	50;10°	50;34°
23;35°	280;35°	50;32°	50;56°
23;33,30°	280;35°	50;34°	50;58°
23;33,8°	280;35°	50;35°	50;59°

Tab. 1

All of these results remain within 1° of the actual latitude of Winchester, which is measured at c.51;4°. The closest approximation to this value in Tab. 1 is 50;59°, as obtained using an oblique ascension of 312;30° and the obliquity value associated with Abraham Ibn Ezra (23;33,8°). Depending on how accurate the author's calculations were, this probably means that he operated with a table for oblique ascensions cast for a latitude of 51°.

Later on, in §7.1:22, the author mentions the ascendant degrees at Arin and Winchester for the lunisolar opposition of 26 August 1067, yet this time no information as to the corresponding time or ascension is provided. Also, the manuscripts confront us with two divergent sets of values. The Latin text in MS V gives the ascendant at Winchester as 198;7° and the ascendant at Arin as 276;5°, whereas the Middle English translation MS L lowers the first value to 190;7° and raises the second to 280;5°. ¹⁰⁷ The latter reading seems to be supported by the third of the three horoscopes included in V (fol. 58r), which has the first house begin at 10° Capricorn.

An attempt to clarify the issue can be made by extracting the implied time of true opposition from the data at hand. From §7.1:21, it follows that the true solar longitude at this point in time was 338;59,1° – 180° = 158;59,1° (158;59,2° according to MS L). The difference in right ascension between this value and 276;5° (the ascendant at Arin in V) is 116;1,59° or 7;44,5h, provided the obliquity of the ecliptic is taken to be 23;33,8°. Applied to an equinoctial sunrise at 6 a.m., this yields a time of 01:44:05 p.m. For an ascendant of 280;5° (the value in L), this result would have to be raised to 02:01:31 p.m. Subtracting the time difference of 4;44h for the distance Winchester-Arin (§7.1:4) gives us 09:00:05 a.m. or 09:17:31 a.m. as the time of true syzygy at the meridian of Winchester.

If the latitude of Winchester is taken to be 51° (and ϵ = 23;33,8°), the difference in oblique ascension between 158;59,1° and 198;7° (the ascendant in V) is 55;17,34° or 3;41,10h. Adding this value to the sunrise time corresponding to λ = 158;59,1°, which is 05:18:48 a.m., we obtain a result of 08:59:58 a.m. ¹⁰⁸ Using the ascendant in L, we instead find a difference in oblique ascension of 43;58,34° or 2;55,54h,

¹⁰⁷ North misinterpreted the ascendant at Arin as referring to the degree at lower mid-heaven (*imum medium coelum*). See NORTH, « Winchester 1067 », p. 134.

¹⁰⁸ The formula to derive the length of daylight from the oblique ascension is explained in CHABÁS, GOLDSTEIN, *A Survey*, p. 31.

pointing to a time of 08:14:42 a.m. The fact that the times implied by the acendants in *V* are only 7 seconds apart, whereas those in *L* differ by more than an hour, may be taken as a fairly strong sign that the readings in *V* are authentic.

1.3.3. Planetary equations

Another conclusion we can draw from the author's detailed calculation of the vernal equinox of 1067 concerns the method by which he derived the solar equation as a function of the Sun's apogeal longitude. In §7.1:8–9 the solar equation at equinox is expressly given as $+1;58,48^\circ$ and then subtracted from $0^\circ = 360^\circ$ to infer the corresponding mean longitude of $358;1,12^\circ$. Here it is worth knowing that the surviving manuscripts of the Tables of Pisa transmit two different tables for the solar equation. In MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 16207, fol. 21r–v (s. XIII), we encounter the common type that also accompanies the Toledan Tables, with a maximum equation of $\pm 1;59,10^\circ$.¹⁰⁹ By contrast, in MS København, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Gks 277 2°, fols. 183v–184r, and twice in MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 3119, fols. 2v, 4r–v, 10r–12v (s. XIII), we have renditions of a table whose maximum equation is $\pm 1;59,8^\circ$ for an anomaly of 90° – 93° . In one of these renditions, MS Vat. lat. 3119, fols. 10r–12v, the table includes a column for the solar declination whose maximum is Ibn Ezra's $23;33,8^\circ$. For a solar equation of $+1;58,48^\circ$ linear interpolation on the basis of these tables suggests an anomaly of $272;55^\circ$, whereas the standard «Toledan» equation tables yield $272;12^\circ$. Based on the apogeal longitude in 1067 (§7.1:7), the anomaly our author used to enter his equation tables should have been $358;1,12^\circ - 85;46^\circ = 272;15,12^\circ$, which makes it likely that the tables he relied on were computed for a maximum equation of $\pm 1;59,10^\circ$.

Other than the case just presented, there are a few more instances in the text where the author cites both the mean and the true longitude of a given planet, allowing us to draw certain conclusions about his method of calculating the corresponding equation. In §7.1:14 we are told that at the moment of the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 1067 the mean Sun was at $168;54,41^\circ$, whereas the true Sun was at $166;57^\circ$. The implied equation is $166;57^\circ - 168;54,41^\circ = -1;57,41^\circ$, which according to the standard equation table would result from an anomaly of $82;55^\circ$. For the alternative table with maximum equation $\pm 1;59,8^\circ$ the corresponding anomaly would be $82;50^\circ$. The anomaly the author should have used based on his apogeal position for 1067 is $168;54,41^\circ - 85;46^\circ = 83;8,41^\circ$. Once again, the standard equation table gives a result that is slightly closer to the one expected.

For Saturn and Jupiter, whose joint true position was $168;51^\circ$ ($168;52^\circ$ in MS *L*), we are given mean longitudes of $162;23,17^\circ$ and $168;22,46^\circ$, respectively (§7.1:14).

¹⁰⁹ For an edition of the standard set of equation tables for all seven planets, see *The Toledan Tables*, ed. PEDERSEN, vol. IV, p. 1245–1306.

Let us begin with Saturn, for which the implied total equation is $168;51^\circ - 162;23,17^\circ = +6;27,43^\circ$. The position of the apogee can be derived from the aforementioned list for 1100, where it is $250;10^\circ$. Following the author's *modus operandi* for the Sun, we subtract $0;28^\circ$ to obtain the apogee for 1067: $250;10^\circ - 0;28^\circ = 249;32^\circ$. We accordingly find the mean centre ($\bar{\kappa}$) to be $162;23,17^\circ - 249;32^\circ + 360^\circ = 272;51,17^\circ$. According to the standard equation table, the corresponding equation of centre is $6;29,9,43^\circ$. Based on the numbers provided, the mean anomaly ($\bar{\alpha}$) should have been $168;54,41^\circ - 162;23,17^\circ = 6;31,24^\circ$. For the true anomaly (α), we accordingly find $6;31,24^\circ - 6;29,9,43^\circ = 0;2,14,17^\circ$. Again following the standard tables, the equation of anomaly will be $0;13,25,42^\circ$, in which case the minutes of proportion reduce to 0. The total equation will hence be $6;29,9,43^\circ + 0;0,13,25,42^\circ = 6;29,23,42^\circ$ rather than $6;27,43^\circ$.

In the case of Jupiter, the total equation implied in the text is $168;51^\circ - 168;22,46^\circ = 0;28,14^\circ$. The apogeal position was $172;40^\circ - 0;28^\circ = 172;12^\circ$, hence $\bar{\kappa} = 168;22,46^\circ - 172;12^\circ + 360^\circ = 356;10,46^\circ$. The equation tables for Jupiter show a corresponding equation of centre of $0;22,55,24^\circ$. For $\bar{\alpha}$ we find $168;54,41^\circ - 168;22,46^\circ = 0;31,55^\circ$, such that $\alpha = 0;31,55^\circ + 0;22,55,24^\circ = 0;54,50,24^\circ$, with an equation of anomaly of $0;9,8,24^\circ$. Minutes or proportion are once again negligible. The total equation is here $0;22,55,24^\circ + 0;9,8,24^\circ = 0;32,3,48^\circ$ compared to the $0;28,14^\circ$ implied in our text.

In §7.1:20–22, the author supplies the positions of the Sun and Moon at the true opposition preceding the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction, yet the numbers fail to add up. The implied true solar longitude is $161;1,26^\circ - 158;59,1^\circ = 2;2,25^\circ$ behind the stated position of the mean Sun, yet a solar equation of $-2;2,25^\circ$ is plainly incompatible with either type of equation table. If we take at face value the mean longitude, we obtain an anomaly of $161;1,26^\circ - 85;46^\circ = 75;15,26^\circ$, which gives an equation of $-1;54,25^\circ$ if the standard table is used, but $-1;54,22^\circ$ if one opts for the alternative noted above.

For the Moon, the same passage offers a mean longitude of $337;50,24^\circ$ and an implied lunar equation of $338;59,1^\circ - 337;50,24^\circ = 1,8,37^\circ$. The two variables needed to calculate the lunar equation are the mean anomaly ($\bar{\alpha}$) and the double elongation between the mean Moon and mean Sun (2η). For η , the recorded data give us $337;50,24^\circ - 161;1,26^\circ = 176;48,58^\circ$, hence $2\eta = 353;37,56^\circ$, for which the standard tables yield an equation of centre of $0;57^\circ$. For $\bar{\alpha} = 212;39,52^\circ$, as stated in §1.20, we find $\alpha = 212;39,52^\circ - 0;57^\circ = 211;42,52^\circ$. The minutes of proportion are 0, which means that we can confine ourselves to the equation of anomaly, which for $\alpha = 211;42,52^\circ$ is $+2;51,16^\circ$. The true longitude of the Moon should accordingly be $337;50,24^\circ + 2;51,16^\circ = 340;41,40^\circ$ as opposed to the stated $338;59,1^\circ$. It may be that the mean anomaly used for the calculation was lower than the $212;39,52^\circ$ mentioned in our text, which comes with the strange qualifier *in media die illa* (§7.1:20). That the intended time of true opposition was not midday is clear from

the ascendant degrees in §7.1:22, which converge on a time close to 9 a.m. (see above).

I.3.4. Mean longitudes

As seen from the foregoing, the planetary equations implicit in our text mostly fail to match the result one can derive by computation from the stated mean longitudes and known apogeal positions. One noteworthy exception is the equation of the Sun in §7.1:8, which at $+1;58,48^\circ$ is almost exactly what the standard tables would lead one to expect. We are not so lucky with the mean solar longitudes recorded in the text, which cannot be re-calculated on the plausible assumption that the Tables of Winchester used by the author were the Tables of Pisa with the meridian shifted 14° westward. For the mean Sun at the beginning of 1 March 1067, the Winchester tables are claimed to yield a mean motion of $11s\ 14;46,40^\circ$ (§7.1:5). Tab. 2 below compares this value with the results obtainable from the Tables of Pisa and Toledan Tables,¹¹⁰ using the implied difference of meridians as a measure of their mutual discrepancy.

	Text	Pisa	Toledo
1 Mar 1067	$344;46,40^\circ$	$344;32,12^\circ$	$344;33,12^\circ$
meridian	0°	$+88;4^\circ$	$+82^\circ$

Tab. 2

That these massive disparities are the result of some transmission error seems altogether likely if we consider that the text's mean longitude at epoch 1 March 1067 stands in no adequate relation to the stated time of the vernal equinox (VE), which is given as 14 March, 19:34h, for the meridian of Arin and as 14 March, 14:50h, for Winchester (§7.1:12). From the stated mean longitude at VE of $358;1,12^\circ$ (§7.1:9) one can derive a difference between 1 March 1067 and VE of $358;1,12^\circ - 344;46,40^\circ = 13;14,32^\circ$. Our author performs this calculation for the meridian of Arin, subtracting not $344;46,40^\circ$, but $344;34^\circ$ (§7.1:5). The assumption here is that the longitude difference between Winchester and Arin (71° or $4;44h$) makes for a decrease in mean solar longitudes of $0;11;40^\circ$ (§7.1:4). This is roughly speaking correct (the precise value based on the Tables of Pisa would be $11;39,48,33\dots^\circ$), yet the subtraction performed in the text involves an error. The mean longitude at Arin should be $344;46,40^\circ - 0;11;40^\circ = 344;35^\circ$ instead of $344;34^\circ$ and the difference between 1 March and VE should be $13;26,12^\circ$ instead of $13;27,12^\circ$.

¹¹⁰ For the Tables of Pisa, I have used the copy in MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 3119, fol. 1v–42r, comparing the results with those produced by Raymond Mercier's program *devplo* (<<http://www.raymondm.co.uk/>>). For the Toledan Tables I have used *devplo* directly.

Another error was committed in deriving the corresponding time interval. According to the Tables of Pisa, the solar mean motion in 13 days is $13 \times 0;59,8,19,42,45...^{\circ}/d = 12;48,48,16...^{\circ}$, which would leave a remainder of $13;27,12^{\circ} - 12;48,48^{\circ} = 0;38,24^{\circ}$, the equivalent of $15;35,1h$. The text has $0;34,24^{\circ}$, with the variant *in aliis* $0;48;13^{\circ}$ noted in the left margin (§7.1:11). For the former value, the time equivalent would be $13;57,37h$, for the latter it is $19;34h$, the time of VE actual stated in the text (§1.12). The chasm between these two timestamps gives further weight to suspicions about the garbled nature of the text before us. There is indeed no way the stated mean longitude for 1 March 1067 ($344;46,40^{\circ}$) could have led to a VE at $19;34h - 4;44h = 14;50h$. Much rather, the mean longitude at epoch should have been $358;1,12^{\circ}$ (assumed mean longitude at VE) $- 13;25,21^{\circ}$ (solar mean motion in $13d\ 14;50h$) $= 344;35,51^{\circ}$. As seen from Tab. 3, however, substituting this value would do little to strengthen North's position according to which the author used the Toledan Tables, which still differ by the equivalent of $c.16^{\circ}$ in longitude. That anybody would have consciously placed Winchester 16° further west than Toledo is scarcely plausible. It should therefore come as no surprise that North's claim according to which the Toledan Table make the Sun enter the sign of Aries at the same time as our text does not withstand independent verification.¹¹¹ For the Tables of Pisa, the implied meridian difference reduces to $22;14^{\circ}$, which still exceeds the expected 14° by a troublingly wide margin.

	Text	Pisa	Toledo
1 Mar 1067	$344;35,51^{\circ}$	$344;32,12^{\circ}$	$344;33,12^{\circ}$
meridian	0°	$+22;14^{\circ}$	$+16;10^{\circ}$

Tab. 3

The mean longitudes of the Sun, Jupiter, and Saturn at the conjunction of the two outermost planets are difficult to assess for the simple reason that the text fails to specify the time at which this conjunction took place. All we are given is a date, 6 September, which was 24 Shawwāl in year 459 of the Arabic calendar (§7.1:17–18). It is implied that this date saw the Sun pass through the degrees of both Jupiter and Saturn, but that the actual conjunction between the two planets happened two days earlier, on 4 September. Using the Tables of Pisa one indeed finds the mean solar longitude of $168;54,41^{\circ}$ accompanying the said conjunction (§7.1:14) on 4 September at $c.1;26h$ after noon. If the author made his calculation for the beginning of the astronomical day, i.e., for noon, this result would point to a meridian difference of $c.21;30^{\circ}$, quite close to the $22;14^{\circ}$ found in the previous example. What is even more striking, however, is the fact that the Tables of Pisa, once they are adjusted to this time and meridian, yield mean longitudes of Jupiter

¹¹¹ See the table in NORTH, « Winchester 1067 », p. 134, which gives the Toledan solar longitude as $00;00^{\circ}$. According to *devplo* the Toledan true Sun on 14 March, $14;50h$ was $359;57,15^{\circ}$.

and Saturn relatively close to those mentioned in the text (§7.1:14).¹¹² As may be seen from Tab. 4, the deviations are in the range of a few seconds of arc, whereas the results produced by the Toledan Tables differ by several minutes.

4 September 1067, 0;0h			
	Text	Pisa (+21;30°)	Toledo (+15;40°)
Sun	168;54,41°	168;54,41°	168;54,41°
Jupiter	168;22,46°	168;23,10°	168;16,35°
Saturn	162;23,17°	162;23,25°	162;30,27°

Tab. 4

I.3.5. Conclusion

The overall picture emerging from the examples discussed above is that North's hypothesis, according to which the calculations in §7 depend on the Toledan Tables, does not hold up in light of the data supplied by MS V. At the same time, however, it has not been possible to recalculate the mean longitudes and equations in this text in a way that would fully bear out the alternative proposition according to which the lost Tables of Winchester were adapted from Abraham Ibn Ezra's Tables of Pisa. This alternative nevertheless retains a strong degree of verisimilitude, especially considering that the author refers to a set of mean motion tables with the same calendrical structure. We have also noted a striking degree of convergence between the Tables of Pisa and the text's simultaneous mean longitudes of the Jupiter, Saturn, and the Sun at the conjunction of September 1067. Both in this example and that of the preceding vernal equinox, the data at hand would require the longitude adjustment to the Tables of Pisa to have exceeded the 14° suggested by the text's placement of Winchester at 19° from the western prime meridian (compared to Pisa's 33°). It remains uncertain at this point whether such discrepancies are entirely due to textual corruptions, which have no doubt affected the numbers in both *V* and *L*, or whether we might be looking at the result of actual changes to the radices or parameters of the Pisan tables. The most likely originator of any such changes remains Ibn Ezra himself, whose travels across Western Europe gave him a strong incentive to refashion his astronomical tables as he moved from one place to another.

¹¹² I have based these calculations on the values displayed in MSS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 16208, fol. 4r and Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 3119, fol. 21v–22r, 25v–26r. According to *devplo*, the mean longitudes of Saturn and Jupiter were 162;23,28° and 168;24,11°, respectively.

I.4. *The Horoscopes of the Great Conjunction of 1067* (David Juste)

Part I, §7.1 is devoted to the calculation of the horoscopes of the great conjunction of 1067 for Winchester. This retrospective conjunction was probably chosen because it coincides with the Norman Conquest of 1066, and we may surmise that Abraham Ibn Ezra, who is one of the earliest accomplished astrologers attested in England, was asked to cast these horoscopes in order to shed light on some aspect of British history. The choice of Winchester, a major political centre of England, also makes perfect sense in this context.

Two horoscopes are taken into account, namely the horoscope of the entry of the Sun into Aries in 1067 (§7.1:2–13) and the horoscope of the syzygy preceding the great conjunction (§7.1:14–22). Each of these horoscopes is cast for two places, i.e. for the centre of the world (said to be Arin, §7.1:3) and for Winchester, so that four horoscopes are actually discussed. The idea of casting horoscopes of great conjunctions for the centre of the world is in tune with Abraham Ibn Ezra's teaching¹¹³ and is also found in the second treatise attributed to al-Kindī.¹¹⁴ Likewise, casting horoscopes for both the entry of the Sun into Aries and the syzygy preceding the great conjunction is what seems to be advocated in the present tripartite text (Part I, §3.3:3–4; Part II, §2:5–8; Part III, §2:2–3). It should be noted, however, that this stands in sharp contradiction to Abraham Ibn Ezra, who resorts to syzygy horoscopes only and strongly rejects the horoscope of the Sun's entry into Aries.¹¹⁵

I.4.1. Horoscope 1

Horoscope 1 is the horoscope of the entry of the Sun into Aries in 1067 at the centre of the world. The text says that this occurred on 14 March at 19:34pm [=15 March at 7:34am] and that the ascendant was then at 25°24' Aries (§7.1:2 and 12). All houses are located at 25°24' (equal houses). The planetary positions match those given in the text (§7.1:13).

¹¹³ 'Olam II, ed. SELA, §5.3, p. 159; also in our Part I, §3.3:3.

¹¹⁴ Part III, §2:2.

¹¹⁵ 'Olam II, ed. SELA, §5, p. 159, where three horoscopes, of varying – weighted – importance, are considered: that of the syzygy preceding the entry of the Sun into Aries (50%); that of the syzygy preceding the entry of the Sun into the cardine in which the conjunction takes place, i.e., Cancer, Libra or Capricorn (33%); and that of the syzygy preceding the great conjunction itself (17%). The same three horoscopes are considered in 'Olam I, ed. SELA, §20, p. 65. Ibn Ezra rejects the horoscope of the Sun's entry into Aries because, as he explains at great length, its exact time, i.e. its ascendant, cannot be known. See 'Olam I, ed. SELA, §§12–18, p. 59–65. These discussions stem from the fact that the exact time of the great conjunction itself cannot be determined, on account of the slowness of Jupiter and Saturn, a point stressed in 'Olam I, ed. SELA, §11, p. 59, and also in our Part I, §3.3:1–2.

The position of Venus is given as 7°15' Aries both in the figure and in the text (« Veneris 0.7.15 »; but 17°16' Aries in the English version: « Venus 17.16 Aries »), but this is evidently a mistake for 7°15' Taurus (Venus was actually at 7°–8° Taurus on 15 March 1067). Such a gross mistake in calculation being unlikely, we must rather suppose that the original text had Venus at « 1.7.15 » or « 1.7.16 » (i.e. 7°15' or 7°16' Taurus), which would have become « Venus 17.16 Aries » in the English and « 0.7.15 » in the Latin. The Latin text was corrected at that place, with « 0 » added over an erased value (see note *ad. loc.*). The fact that Venus at 7°15' Aries is shown below Mars at 14°26' Aries in the figure also suggests that Venus was meant to be in Taurus.

Jupiter is wrongly shown in the fifth house instead of the sixth. Note that the first copying mistake mentioned below does not affect Jupiter's house position. There is a slight discrepancy for the Head of the Dragon, located at 11°40' Virgo in the figure and at 11°30'14" in the text (11° in the English version).

Three copying mistakes have been corrected in the figure: (1) Jupiter is located at 21° Virgo (« Iupiter 21 Virginis »), but this is an obvious misreading for « Iupiter 2.1 Virginis » as given in the text (« Iupiter 5.2.1 »). (2) The cusp of the third house is located at 25°34' (Gemini), instead of 25°24'. (3) The cusp of the twelfth house is located at 24°28' (Aquarius), instead of 25°24'.

I.4.2. Horoscope 2

Horoscope 2 is the same horoscope cast for Winchester. The longitude of Winchester is given in the text (§7.1:4), from which the author infers that the time of the present horoscope was 14:50pm [=15 March at 2:50am] and that the ascendant was then at 9°43' Capricorn (§7.1:12), a value which has been rounded up to 10° in the figure. The horoscope provides only the positions of the houses, which are here unequal in length. This is the essential difference with Horoscope 1 and this difference agrees with the double house system advocated by Ibn Ezra in several of his works.¹¹⁶ It is unclear why the planets are omitted. The planets would have the same longitudes as in Horoscope 1, but they would appear in different houses, something which would significantly affect the astrological judgement. A copying mistake has been corrected in the figure, namely the cusp

¹¹⁶ See *Ṭe'amim* I, ed. SELA, §10.2, p. 97 (and comm. p. 174–175); *Mishpēṭei ha-mazzalot*, ed. SELA, §§13 and 76, p. 499–501 and 555 (and comm. p. 581–582 and 632). See also SHLOMO SELA, *Abraham Ibn Ezra on Elections, Interrogations, and Medical Astrology. A Parallel Hebrew-English Critical Edition of the 'Book of Elections' (3 Versions), the 'Book of Interrogations' (3 Versions), and the 'Book of the Luminaries'*, Brill, Leiden – Boston 2011 (*Études sur le judaïsme médiéval*, 50), p. 132–133; ID., *Abraham Ibn Ezra on Nativities and Continuous Horoscopy. A Parallel Hebrew-English Critical Edition of the 'Book of Nativities' and the 'Book of Revolution'*, Leiden, 2013 (*Études sur le judaïsme médiéval*, 59), p. 404 and 406–407.

of the eleventh house located at 64° Sagittarius instead of 4° Sagittarius (cf. the fifth house at 4° Gemini).

I.4.3. Horoscope 3

Horoscope 3 is the horoscope of the syzygy (opposition) preceding the great conjunction at the centre of the world. The great conjunction is said to have occurred on 6 September 1067 (§7.1:17) and the preceding syzygy on 26 August (§7.1:20). Again, the planetary positions are missing (but they are provided in the text, §7.1:19) and only the positions of the houses are given, all at 10° of each sign (equal houses) starting with the ascendant rounded up to 10° Capricorn (6°05' Capricorn in the text (§7.1:22), but the English version has 10°05' Capricorn, a variant which suggests that the English version does not derive from our MS V).

One would have expected a fourth horoscope for the syzygy preceding the great conjunction in Winchester, for which the ascendant is provided in the text at 18°07' Libra (§7.1:22).

I.5. *Identifying the Translators* (Shlomo Sela)

As said above, Part I incorporates a hitherto unknown Latin translation of Ibn Ezra's *'Olam III* but we are not informed about the identity of the Latin translator. Part II is the smallest component of our tripartite text (900 out of 8,400 words). The Latin translator informs us in the incipit that it includes a treatise on the judgements of the world-years composed by Ya'qūb, the son of Isaac al-Kindī, previously translated from Arabic into Hebrew.¹¹⁷ The identity of the Latin translator or of the translator of the Arabic into Hebrew source text, though, is not revealed. Part III covers almost half of the tripartite text (3,600 out of 8,400 words). From a combined scrutiny of its incipit and colophon we learn that it includes the Latin translation carried out by Henry Bate in 1278 in Mechelen of another treatise by Ya'qūb, entitled *Book on the judgments of the revolutions of the world-years*, and that the Latin translation was also carried on the basis of an Arabic into Hebrew translation.¹¹⁸ We are left in the dark, though, regarding the identity of the translator of the Arabic into Hebrew source text. Who carried out the Latin translations of *'Olam III* and of the first Kindian treatise, and the Arabic into Hebrew translations of the first and second Kindian treatises?

¹¹⁷ See Part II §1:1

¹¹⁸ See Part III §1:1–4 and colophon.

I.5.1.

That Henry Bate, who is credited with being the Latin translator of the second Kindian treatise, was also the Latin translator of *‘Olam* III and of the first Kindian treatise, emerges from the fact that all three parts of our text bear the hallmark of Bate as translator of Hebrew texts: double Latin translations to single underlying Hebrew terms. You will not find such double translations with the same frequency in the Latin translations of Ibn Ezra’s astrological treatises by Pietro d’Abano, Pierre de Limoges, Arnoul de Quincampoix, and anonymous translators as you may find in all of Bate’s translations of Ibn Ezra’s works.¹¹⁹ This most distinctive feature is also conspicuous in Part I,¹²⁰ Part II,¹²¹ and Part III.¹²² Moreover, four among the seven doublets in Part I have their counterpart in Bate’s other translations of Ibn Ezra’s astrological writings.¹²³ A further feature that betrays Bate’s hand in Part I, in the title of the second table of lunar mansions, is the use of *philosophi* to denote astrologers/astronomers.¹²⁴ For additional information showing that Bate was the translator of Part I, see below, p. 238.

As far as we know Henry Bate was not conversant with Hebrew. How then could the Hebrew into Latin translations of *‘Olam* III and the two Kindian treatises be carried out? It is reasonable to assume that Bate carried out these translations à

¹¹⁹ I hope to expand on this point in a paper in the near future.

¹²⁰ In Part I, see: « in inferiori parte orbis ecentrici sive in opposito augis » (§1.1:4); « partes sive divisiones » (§1.1:7); « actio vel operatio » (§2.5:7); « in loco lineae equalis sive medii mundi » (§3.3:3); « carnifex seu decollator » (§5.2:22); « trusio sive cornus » (§5.3:1); « numerus vel quantitas » (§6.3:5).

¹²¹ In Part II, see: « universalis seu communia » (§2:1); « partes terre seu regiones » (§2:4); « signum seu figura » (§2:5); « terra seu regio » (§2:9); « principes magni aut magnates » (§3:1); « milites et belligeres » (§3:1); « Christiani vel non circumcisi » (§3:2); « terram Iudeorum, id est Iudea » (§3:3); « terra Dalhenam, id est Indorum » (§3:2); « terra Cumanorum, id est Arabum » (§3:5); « Philistin, id est Palestina » (§4:2); « Christiani id est non circumcisi » (§4:5); « terra Alterath id est terra Turcorum » (§4:6); « Metarmonia id est Macedonia » (§4:11); « Maheraen id est Egiptus » (§4:11); « Baldac, id est Baudas » (§5:1).

¹²² In Part III, see: « revolutio anni mundi vel orbis » (§2:2); « duci vel dirigi » (§3:1); « dominus sive princeps » (§3:5); « Romani, id est Christiani » (§3:7); « antiquus vel precedens » (§5:5); « generale sive commune » (§10:2); « in signo aqueo vel in signo super aquam significante » (§11:2); « temperate sive mediocres » (§13:3); « dispositio sive figura celi stellati » (§13:4); « lux sive splendor » (§14:11); « radius sive splendor » (§15:6); « detrimentum seu exitium » (§20:2); « mundicies aeris sive serenitatis » (§21:11); « ducas vel dirigas » (§24:2).

¹²³ See MS Leipzig, UB 1466, fol. 48rb (Bate’s translation of *Mishpetei ha-Mazzalot*: « numerus seu quantitas »); fol. 53vb (Bate’s translation of *Te’amim* II: « actio vel operatio »); fol. 68va (Bate’s translation of *Te’amim* I: « partes seu divisiones »); fol. 15rb (Bate’s translation of *Reshit Hokhmah*: « in opposito augis hoc est in circulo ecentrico »).

¹²⁴ See Part I, §5.3:2 and below note 155; cf. Bate’s *Nativitas*, in STEEL et al. (eds.), *The Astrological Autobiography*, p. 130, l. 91–92, 96; p. 137, l. 285; p. 138, l. 328; p. 140, l. 373–374, et passim.

quatre mains: Hagin le Juif, Bate's neighbor in Mechelen,¹²⁵ translated from Hebrew into French, and Bate rendered then from French into Latin. We may assume that Henry Bate found the Hebrew text of *'Olam III* as well as the Hebrew translations of the two Kindian treatises in a Hebrew codex, and decided to translate them into Latin because at this stage of his career he was interested in world astrology and weather forecasting. Moreover, one is tempted to assume that Henry Bate translated these three works together because he considered *'Olam III* to be useful for the understanding of some of the topics addressed in the two Kindian treatises, a sort of introduction to them. This is supported by the following table of correspondences of topics addressed in the three parts of our text:

Topic	Part I	Part II	Part III
conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter	§3.2:1–6; §3.3:1–2	§2:1–11	§2:1–2
revolution of the world-year	§3.3:3–5		§2:3
nature of planets	§2.1:1–3 through §2.5:1–9		§2:2; §17:1; §18:6; §22:4; §26:2
nature of the signs	§2.6:1–4		§2:3
lunar mansions	whole chapter 5		§10:1; §13:1–4;
humid lunar mansions	§5.3:4, 12, 16, 17, 22, 27		§13:1–2
aspects	§2.6:2		§14:1–12

Since the colophon of Part III informs that the second Kindian treatise was translated by Henry Bate in 1278, it is plausible that this year is also the date of the translation of the first Kindian treatise as well as that of the Latin translation of *'Olam III*. If true, this assumption makes the Latin translation of *'Olam III* Bate's first translation of Ibn Ezra's astrological writings. This choice of translating three treatises addressing world astrology and weather forecasting in 1278 fits well with the fact that Bate decided to translate Ibn Ezra's *'Olam I* in 1281.

I.5.2.

As said above, Bate's Latin translations of both Kindian treatises were carried out on the basis of Arabic into Hebrew translations. Was Abraham Ibn Ezra their Arabic into Hebrew translator?¹²⁶

¹²⁵ For the connection between Henry Bate and Hagin le Juif, see SHLOMO SELA, « The Impact of Hagin Le Juif's French Translations on Subsequent Latin Translations of Abraham Ibn Ezra's Astrological Writings », *Jewish Quarterly Review* (forthcoming).

¹²⁶ This possibility was suggested by David Juste in STEEL et al. (eds.) *The Astrological Autobiography*, p. 49.

There are no explicit references to Ibn Ezra as translator of these two texts but a scrutiny of the links between them and Ibn Ezra's work may be useful to furnish some clues. Let us begin with the first Kindian treatise in Part II. The closest one comes is in a list of countries and regions under the charge of a pair consisting of a planet and a zodiacal sign ascribed to Enoch.¹²⁷ This list in Part II finds a counterpart in 'Olam I, although the list is ascribed in 'Olam I to Enoch, the Egyptian, various items do not appear in the same order as in Part II, and sometimes the details are not identical.¹²⁸ There is also a close correspondence between Part II and 'Olam I regarding a list of planets and types of human beings under their charge.¹²⁹ 'Olam I, though, ascribes this list to the ancient Enoch, and the order of presentation of the planets is different in these two sources.

Another interesting parallel is found in the last list of signs of cites of Part II.¹³⁰ This list has its counterpart in 'Olam I, 'Olam II, *Nativitates*, *Epitome*, and *Tractatus pluviarum*.¹³¹ Remarkably, all these lists include references to the signs of Lucca and Pisa, two cities that correspond to what we know about Ibn Ezra's peregrinations in Italy. *Olam II*, *Nativitates*, *Epitome*, and *Tractatus pluviarum*, include also short notes implying that the author himself made observations to determine their signs, which allows us to surmise that Ibn Ezra also spent some time in Pisa. However, the list in Part II keeps silence regarding these observations, and includes only the degrees of the first two cities, whilst its items do not always correspond to the items in the parallel lists in Ibn Ezra's work.

Let us now turn to Part III. We have plenty of references in Ibn Ezra's oeuvre to al-Kindī, which include quotations or paraphrases from his books, but without specifying their titles or mentioning « al-Kindī in his book » or « in his books ».¹³² The only exception to this rule is a long quotation from al-Kindī's *Book of the Revolution* in 'Olam I.¹³³ This title is similar to that assigned to the second Kindian

¹²⁷ See Part II §4:1–7.

¹²⁸ See 'Olam I, ed. SELA, §37:1, p. 76–77.

¹²⁹ See Part II §3:1; cf. 'Olam I, ed. SELA, §36:1, p. 76–77. There is also a similar list in *Epitome*, ed. JOACHIM HELLER (1548), I:5, sig. F3v.

¹³⁰ See Part II §6:1–5.

¹³¹ 'Olam I, ed. SELA, §38:1–24, p. 76–79; 'Olam II, ed. SELA, §15:1–25, p. 164–167; *Nativitates*, ed. SELA, I i 2:6–7, p. 82–83; *Epitome*, ed. JOACHIM HELLER (1548), I:8, sig. G4r; *Tractatus pluviarum*, in CHARLES BURNETT, « Weather Forecasting, Lunar Mansions and a Disputed Attribution: The *Tractatus pluviarum et aeris mutationis* and *Epitome totius astrologiae* of 'Iohannes Hispalensis' », in ANNA AKASOY, WIM RAVEN (eds.), *Islamic Thought in the Middle Ages: Studies in Text, Transmission and Translation, in Honour of Hans Daiber*, Brill, Leiden 2008 (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science: Texts and Studies, 75), p. 246.

¹³² See the lists of authorities mentioned in all the editions of Ibn Ezra's astrological writings.

¹³³ 'Olam I, ed. SELA, §44:1–6, 82–83: « Ya'qūb al-Kindī said in his *Book of the Revolution*: Observe the conjunction or opposition of the luminaries before the Sun enters Aries, whichever occurs last. If you find that the sign of the ascendant is a watery one, it indicates that there will be rain at this conjunction or opposition, particularly if the place of the conjunction or opposition is in one of

treatise in the colophon of Part III: *Book on the judgments of the revolutions of the world-years*.¹³⁴ Unfortunately, we find no *verbatim* match of this quotation in Part III although there is a passage ascribed to Kanakah, the Indian, that bears slight resemblances to the quotation from Al-Kindī's *Book of the Revolution* in 'Olam I.¹³⁵

Al-Kindī's *Book on the judgments of the revolutions of the world-years* in Part III and Ibn Ezra in his whole astrological corpus address in similar terms a number of similar astrological doctrines. However, Ibn Ezra never acknowledges that he is following al-Kindī, as follows:

The dodecatemoria, a division of the signs into twelve parts; here 'Olam I also includes an example but ascribes the account to Dorotheus, the king.¹³⁶

Finding which of two planets in conjunction is victorious or prevails over the other;¹³⁷ here Ibn Ezra's ultimate source is Abū Ma'shar's *Great Introduction*.¹³⁸

The 12 keys of the Moon, used for weather forecasting; here 'Olam I says that this doctrine has been verified by experience by the ancients and the moderns, and 'Olam II and the *Epitome* assign portions of power to the keys of the Moon, which Part III does not.¹³⁹

The lunar mansions; while Part III names 6 lunar mansions signifying humidity, 'Olam I names 9, 'Olam II names 9 mansions of rain and three of moistness, and *Epitome* names 10 humid mansions;¹⁴⁰ as for the position of the mansions, while

the cardines of the ascendant at this time, according to the latitude of the city for which you calculate the luminaries. But if the place of conjunction or opposition happens to be in one of the places falling <from the cardines>, judge that it will not rain during the entire month and the larger part of the year. If the sign of the ascendant is a watery one and the lord of the sign is in an aspect to it [the ascendant] as well, this is an absolute indication that rain will fall; if the lord of the ascendant is there, there will be even more <rain>. And if the lord <of the ascendant> is with the luminaries, then rain will be extremely abundant. If you wish to know what day it will rain, find the day when the Moon reaches the degree of the ascendant – then it will rain ».

¹³⁴ See colophon of Part III.

¹³⁵ See Part III §21:1–11.

¹³⁶ See Part III §5:1–2; cf. 'Olam I, ed. SELA, §32:1–8, p. 72–75; 'Olam II, ed. SELA, §21:1–2, p. 170–171.

¹³⁷ See Part III §6:1–4; cf. *Te'amim* I, ed. SELA, §7.1:4–10, p. 88–89; *Te'amim* II, ed. SELA, §4.4:1–3, 210–211; *Moladot*, ed. SELA, III, vii 4, 1–11, p. 160–163; 'Olam I, ed. SELA, §21:1–4, 64–67; *Me'orot*, ed. SELA, §30:1–7, p. 474–475; *She'elot* I, ed. SELA, §7.3:10–19, p. 270–271; *She'elot* II, ed. SELA, §7.2:2, p. 370–371; *Mishpetei ha-mazzalot*, ed. SELA, §33:1–7, §34:1–5, p. 516–519. *Electiones*, MS Erfurt, UFB, Amplon. O.89, fol. 45r; *Epitome*, ed. JOACHIM HELLER (1548), XXIII, sig. D3v.

¹³⁸ *Great Introduction*, ed. BURNETT, YAMAMOTO, VII:4, [8] p. 746–747.

¹³⁹ See Part III §12:1–2; cf. 'Olam I, ed. SELA, §47:4, §48:1–14, p. 84–85; 'Olam II, ed. SELA, §18:1–13, §19:1–10, p. 168–169; *Epitome*, ed. JOACHIM HELLER (1548), I:3, sig. F2v–F3r.

¹⁴⁰ See Part III §10:2; §13:1–4; §15:1; §16:1; §22:2,4; cf. 'Olam I, ed. SELA, §62:1–5, p. 92–93; §63:1–11, p. 92–95; 'Olam II, ed. SELA, §37:4, p. 180–181; §43:1–4, p. 184–185; §44:1–3, p. 184–185; §45:1–4, p. 184–185; §49:6, p. 188–189. Ibn Ezra devoted complete chapters to the 28 lunar mansions in *Neḥoshet* I, MS heb. Paris 1061, fols. 156v–157r and *Neḥoshet* II, MS heb. Paris 1061, fols. 193r–194r. See also *Epitome*, ed. JOACHIM HELLER (1548), I:11, sig. H1v–H2v.

Part III says that there is need to subtract 9 equal degrees from the position of the Sun and the Moon and from the position of the other planets, 'Olam I speaks of 8°.

The calculation of the lot of rain; while Part III assigns this lot to Sahl, the Jew, *Reshit Hokhmah* ascribes the same lot to Enoch and its ultimate source is Abū Ma'shar's *Kitāb al-sirr*.¹⁴¹

From this survey of links between Part II and Part III, on the one hand, and Ibn Ezra's astrological corpus, on the other, it emerges that at the present stage we do not have solid evidence indicating that Ibn Ezra was the translator of the two treatises ascribed to al-Kindī in part II and Part III. In addition, the Latin translations in Part II and Part III do not reveal any trace of Ibn Ezra's peculiar terminology, in contrast with that of Part I. We may surmise, then, that the two Kindian treatises in Part II and Part III were translated from Arabic into Hebrew after Ibn Ezra's death, as in the case of al-Kindī's *Letter on moistures and rain* and *On the causes <of the forces> attributed to the higher bodies, which indicate the origin of rains*, translated from Arabic into Hebrew by Kalonymus ben Kalonymus ben Me'ir between 1307 and 1317.¹⁴²

1.6. *The al-Kindī Connection* (Charles Burnett)

The question is whether the two treatises attributed to al-Kindī (Part II and Part III) are genuinely by al-Kindī, and if so whether an original text can be identified or, failing that, whether sufficient parallels in other works of al-Kindī can be found. The first problem is that the Latin text states that the work was 'compiled' ('*collegit/compilavit*') by al-Kindī rather than 'composed', and both treatises do, in fact, consist largely of quotations – Enoch (Hermes), the scholars of Babylon, Māshā'allāh, Kanakah, the scholars of Persia, and Sahl (Ibn Bishr). Compilation is not a style recognizable in the extant works of al-Kindī, which develop arguments of the author's own or present doctrine without indicating its origin (e.g., in al-Kindī's work on astrological judgements, *The Forty Chapters*). It may be more profitable to search for the texts that have been compiled. The second problem is that al-Kindī's doctrine on general or mundane astrology (which includes weather forecasting and the lunar mansions), appears in several texts or excerpts, under different titles, and in different languages: *Fī taḥwīl al-sina* ('On the Revolution of the Year'), *Sefer he-Tekufah* (*Liber revolutionum*), chapters from *Al-arba'ūna bāban* ('The Forty Chapters'; *Iudicia astrorum*), *Risāla fī aḥdāth al-jaww* ('Letter on the Phenomena of the Atmosphere'), *Saturnus in Ariete* ('Saturn in Aries'), and two

¹⁴¹ See Part III §22:1–7; cf. *Reshit Hokhmah*, ed. SELA, §9.19:3–4, p. 260–261; 'Olam II, ed. SELA, §40:1–4, 182–183; BURNETT, « Weather Forecasting », p. 234.

¹⁴² See GERRIT BOS, CHARLES BURNETT, *Scientific Weather Forecasting in the Middle Ages: The Writings of al-Kindī*, Kegan Paul International, London and New York 2000, p. 52–53.

letters fully extant only in Hebrew translations: *Iggeret ba-Laḥuyyot u-va-Maṭar* ('Letter I, On Moistures and Rain') and *Iggeret ba-'Illot ha-Meyuḥasot el ha-Isshim ha-'Elyonim ha-Morot 'al-Hawayat ha-Geshamim* ('Letter II, On the Causes of the Forces Attributed to the Higher Bodies, which Indicate the Origin of Rains') – the letters were combined (probably already in Arabic) in a treatise extant only in Latin under the title *De mutatione temporum* ('On the Changes of the Weather').¹⁴³ In addition, there is a *Maqāla Taḥāwīl al-Sinīn* ('Discourse on the Revolutions of the Years'), extant in MS Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo, 918/2, fols. 10–11.¹⁴⁴ It is unclear how many texts are involved, and how much overlap there is between the content of these texts. It is quite plausible, that another Arabic text (or texts) lies behind the two treatises of al-Kindī edited here (Parts II and III), even though al-Kindī is not otherwise known for writing compilations. Comparisons yield the following information:

In spite of the similarity of the title, Part II ('On the Judgements of the World Years') does not include any passage corresponding to the quotation from the 'Book of the Revolutions (of the years)' by al-Kindī cited by Ibn Ezra in his *Sefer ha-Olam* I and as 'The Book of the Revolution of the year' in MS Tehran, Majlis-i Shūrā-Millī 6452 (both edited in Bos and Burnett, p. 421–433).

Part III, on the prediction of weather and the lunar mansions, does not correspond in a sustained way to any section of al-Kindī's *Letter II*, largely because, for al-Kindī in the *Letter*, following the Indians, the lunar mansions are 27 in number, rather than 28. Hence the differences between the following passages:¹⁴⁵

Part III	<i>Letter II</i> (Bos and Burnett, p. 254)
§13 (1) There are six lunar mansions signifying humidity, as follows: ¹⁴⁶ 4, 12, 16, 17, 22, 27. (2) There are six dry mansions: 2, 6, 9, 18, 25, 26. (3) The other mansions are temperate or moderate. (4) You will be able to know the mansions in this manner:	90 When the Moon dwells in six of these <mansions>, namely 4, 7, 12, 16, 21, 26, rain, water and humidity are increased. 91 Six mansions, namely 2, 5, 9, 17, 24, 25, are dry and do not indicate rain. 92 Eleven

¹⁴³ All the extant texts and excerpts attributed to al-Kindī and mentioned up to this point, have been edited and translated in Bos, BURNETT, *Scientific Weather Forecasting*. A paragraph of the Arabic text of *Letter II*, 144–147 (ed. Bos, BURNETT, p. 241 and 260) is quoted in Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Baqqār, *Kitāb al-amṭār wa-l-as'ār* ('Book of Rains and Prices'), 131: see CHEDLI GUESMI, JULIO SAMSÓ, *Astrometeorología en al-Andalus y el Magrib entre los siglos VIII y XV*, Brepols, Turnhout 2008.

¹⁴⁴ For a translation into Spanish, see RAFAEL MUÑOZ JIMÉNEZ, « Una maqāla astrológica de al-Kindī », *Boletín de la Asociación Española de Orientalistas*, 15 (1979), p. 127–139.

¹⁴⁵ The other differences are that al-Kindī, *Letter II*, makes mansion 7 humid, whereas Part III makes mansion 17 (the 'extra' mansion) humid; and al-Kindī, *Letter II* makes mansion 5 dry, whereas Part III makes mansion 6 dry. Both 7 and 17 are humid, but 6 is moderate; Part III may have made a mistake.

¹⁴⁶ Part III gives numbers and names; I have omitted the names here; *Letter II* gives only the numbers.

take into consideration in which mansion the Moon is seen...	mansions are moderate, neither moist nor dry.

There is, however, a close and sustained correspondence between Part III §18–20, and the text called *Risāla fī aḥdāth al-jaww* ('Letter on the Phenomena of the Atmosphere'; Bos and Burnett, p. 409–419), as follows:¹⁴⁷

Part III	<i>Risāla fī aḥdāth al-jaww</i>
§18 (1) I will now give you a common and general rule to know the essence of cold, heat, humidity and dryness. (2) Take always into consideration whether Saturn and Jupiter are in the figures of the uppermost circle, for Saturn signifies time in its entirety and Jupiter the year.	1 The first indication for heat and cold and the other <qualities> occurring in the atmosphere is from Saturn and Jupiter, for Saturn is the indicator of the quarter, and Jupiter the indicator of the year.
§18 (3) Examine the moment of the entrance of the Sun into the head of the mobile signs and observe whether the two upper <planets> are in hot signs, because then this quarter of the year will be hot; and if in cold, it will be cold; and if in humid, it will be humid. If they are in different places, as when one is in a hot sign and the other in a cold, this quarter will be temperate, and the same applies to humidity and dryness.	2 When the Sun enters the first minute of every mobile sign, look at the place of Saturn and Jupiter; when they are both in hot signs, that quarter is hot, and when they are in cold signs, it is cold, and the same in humidity and dryness. 3 If they are different and one of them is in a hot sign and the other in a cold sign, the quarter is moderate between heat and cold, and likewise in humidity and dryness.
§20 (1) Moreover, Abū Ma'shar said: The great key of rain is when Saturn conjoins the Sun at the moment of the conjunction or opposition <of the luminaries>, or when it is in any aspect to it, at the moment of the keys of the Moon, because then it signifies heavy rain for many days.	9 The greater opening is the application of the Sun to Saturn. Saturn is like the male principle, the Sun like the female principle. There is no generation of times without both of these. 10 And when it applies to Saturn in the conjunction or opposition or quartile or one of the numbered mansions of the Moon, the air becomes humid.
§20 (2) The small key is the conjunction of one planet, in its body or by aspect, with a planet that is the lord of the house of its detriment or destruction, e.g. if Mercury conjoins Jupiter, for this signifies humidity with a strong wind; likewise, Venus with Mars <signifies> humidity with lightning and thunder; the Moon with Saturn signifies a strong frost and snow in the winter.	11 The smaller opening is the application of each one of the lower planets with the Lord <of the sign> opposite to its house. 12 When Mercury applies to Jupiter, humidity occurs together with winds, and when Venus applies to Mars, humidity occurs together with lightning, thunder and thunderbolts, and when the Moon applies to Saturn, humidity

¹⁴⁷ Correspondence is indicated by italics.

	occurs together with tranquillity, coldness, snow, hail, ice, and destructive rain.

In Part III §20 is attributed to Abū Ma'shar whereas there are no citations of authorities in the *Risāla fī aḥdāth al-jaww* (which is typical of the genuine al-Kindī). This correspondence is not sufficiently close for the *Risāla fī aḥdāth al-jaww* to be regarded as a direct source for Part III, but the fact that the order of the material is the same in both texts strongly suggests a common transmission of doctrine.

The lot of weather in Part III §22 corresponds to a Latin addition to the al-Kindī *Letters* (i.e. in the joint letter *De mutatione temporum*, 7.L6–7; ed. Bos and Burnett, p. 299), which in turn corresponds to a passage in 'Umar ibn al-Farrukhān's *Kitāb mukhtaṣar al-masā'il* ('The Abbreviated Book of Interrogations'), ch. 81 (Bos and Burnett, p. 444) and the *Tractatus Pluviarum et aeris mutationis secundum magistrum Iohannem Yspalensem*.¹⁴⁸ In Part III the description of this lot is attributed to Sahl the Jew (= Sahl ibn Bishr); in 'Umar it is attributed to Abū Ma'shar. The correspondence is as follows:

Part III	<i>De mutatione temporum</i>	'Umar ibn al-Farrukhān	Iohannes Yspalensis
§22 (1) Sahl the Jew also said: you must take account, for the day under consideration, of the lot of weather, which will know in this way: (2) You need to measure, for the day under consideration, the longitude between the place of the Sun and that of Saturn, and cast this number from the place of the Moon in the morning, at sunrise, and look whether this lot falls in one of Saturn's houses,	Chapter 7, L6 Inspect also the lot of the days, i.e. measure <the degrees> from the degree of the Sun to the degree of Saturn and cast <this number> from the degree of the Moon towards the rising of the Sun ¹⁴⁹ for the whole day.	Chapter 81: Another lot which was mentioned by Abū Ma'shar ... and is called the lot of the days is: measure <the degrees> from the degree of the Sun to the degree of Saturn and cast <this number> from the degree of the Moon at the moment of the rising of the Sun every day.	25 Et quot sint gradus equales inter Solem et Saturnum quoque mane considera et totidem gradus computa a loco Lune: quo pertingunt, ibi pars pluvie erit.

¹⁴⁸ Edited in BURNETT. « Weather Forecasting », p. 257. Note that the interpretation of the 20th lunar mansion as being « secundum Hispalensem » (Part I, 3:1) is different from the interpretation in this work.

¹⁴⁹ This probably means « in an easterly direction », which could be the meaning in Part III also.

because this signifies obscurity of the sky, if Saturn aspects it and if it is in any of the lunar mansions signifying rain.			
§22 (3) If the Moon falls in one of the houses of Jupiter or <i>Mercury</i> , this signifies winds.	L7 If <i>Mercury</i> aspects this lot or it coincides with Mercury, there will be wind on that day.	If <i>Mercury</i> aspects this lot or it coincides with Mercury, there will be strong winds on that day. And they will be even stronger when the Moon is in it.	26 Que computatio si erit in domo Lune vel Veneris, significat pluviam, si in domo Mercurii vel Iovis, significat ventos, si Martis vel Solis, serenitatem, si Saturni, significat nubila

A consultation of Abū Ma'shar's *Kitāb al-Sirr* (see Bos and Burnett, p. 382) and Sahl ibn Bishr's *Kitāb taḥāwīl al-sinīn wa-mā yaḥdathu fī al-'ālam* ('Book of the Revolutions of the Years and that which Occurs in the World' or *Fatidica*) might reveal the original passages which lie behind these quotations.

The enumeration of the 'keys' of the Moon (i.e. significant phases) in Part III §13, has a parallel in al-Kindī, *Iudicia*, chapter 5, 675 (ed. Bos and Burnett, p. 398, 401, 404, 406; only in Robert of Ketton's translation, *ibid*, p. 404, is the full list given). But a closer source would be Ibn Ezra, *Sefer Ha-Olam (I)*, quoting « Abū Shāriq » (Bos and Burnett, p. 49). The value of the 'body' of each planet in Part III §14 (4) is found widely – e.g. in Abū Ma'shar, *Great Introduction*, VII, chapter 3 (ed. Yamamoto and Burnett, p. 739), but not (as far as I know) in other works of al-Kindī.

Thus there is no independent proof that Parts II and III are taken from genuine works (or from one work) of al-Kindī, though this attribution remains plausible.

I.7. *Description of the Manuscripts*
(David Juste)

Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 1407

s. XIV^{ex}–XVⁱⁿ (Schuba). ORIGIN: Germany (Schuba), perhaps Liège. The opening text (fols. 1r–1v), addressed to an unnamed master in Liège shortly before 10 July 1387, is perhaps by Eustachius de Eldris, who is otherwise known as the author of an astrological work, *De directionibus*, written in Liège in 1390. One of the two extant MSS of *De directionibus* also preserves Henry Bate of Mechelen's *Nativitas* (MS Segovia, Archivo y Biblioteca de la Catedral, B 349), while the present manuscript contains works translated or authored by Bate (fols. 55r–71v). This suggests that the present manuscript (at least fols. 9–71, all in one hand) derives from a manuscript owned by Bate himself, which he would have left in Liège. PROVENANCE: Elector Palatine Ottheinrich (1502–1559); Heidelberg, Bibliotheca Palatina, by 1556; Vatican library in 1623.

Paper, 154 fols., three main hands (fols. 1, 9–71 and 75–152).

Astrology: Eustachius de Eldris (?), judgement on the conjunction Saturn-Mars of 10 July 1387 « Reverendissimo in Christo patri ac domino domino meo Leodien<si> licet indignus as nullius inter astrorum sapientes sufficientie sum reputandus solacii tamen causa cum magna diligentia... » (1r–1v); astronomical diagram: motion of Mercury (2r); 16th-c. table of contents (covering fols. 9–152) by a librarian of the Bibliotheca Palatina (8v); Albumasar, *Flores* (9r–18r); Zael, *Fatidica* (18r–38r); Albumasar, *De revolutionibus annorum mundi* (38r–55r); **Abraham Avenezre, *De revolutionibus annorum mundi* (55r–58r); Alkindi (?), *Liber de iudiciis revolutionum annorum mundi* (58r–62r); Henry Bate of Mechelen, *De diebus creticis periodorumque causis* (63r–71v); Guido Bonatti, *Liber introductorius ad iudicia stellarum*, Book IX on nativities (75ra–152ra), preceded by a chapter index added by a later hand (73r–74v). Blank: fols. 2v–8r (except short note fol. 2v), 62v, 72, 152v–154.**

LIT.: Ludwig Schuba, *Die Quadriviums-Handschriften der Codices Palatini Latini in der Vatikanischen Bibliothek*, Reichert, Wiesbaden 1992 (Kataloge der Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, 2), p. 183–184.

London, Royal College of Physicians, 384

s. XV^{ex}–XVIⁱⁿ (after 1481, date of the printed edition of Bartholomaeus de Paczków's *Commentum in Ephemeridem Regiomontani* fols. 87r–93r; the year 1470 is mentioned fol. 98r; the date 1405, given in a colophon on fol. 9v, is either a mistake or the date of the exemplar). ORIGIN: England.

Paper, 112 fols. (foliated 1–86 and 1–26), a single hand.

Astrology and astronomy in English (fols. 1r–98v and 101r–101v) and in Latin (fols. 99r–100r and 102r–112v): 16 questions on thunder, lightning and related phenomena «The phylosofyr saith in a boke þ^t he makith... » (1r–3r); *Iudicia Herfordensis multum bona et utilia*, English (4r–6r); Messahallah, *Liber de intentionibus secretorum astronomie*, English (6r–9v); « Of these thingis forsoth þ^t belongen to iudicials of sterris for to be had in mynde these 6 arne... » (9v–13r); tables: meteorological prognostics from the association of pairs of planets in each of the 12 signs (13v–25v); note « In knowyng of the partyes of the yere if thingis... » (25v); « Off the parte of water in many thingis... » (25v–26r); Alkindi (?), *Saturnus in Ariete sub radiis...* attr. Haly, English (26r–26v and 27v–28r); short text on the unseen urine « A tracte to discerne uryne what it is not seen... » (27r); Messahallah, *Epistola de rebus eclipsium*, English (28r–30r); elections and various astrological considerations « For Iorneys. Thys chapter is of eleccions of tyme... » (30v–33r); Albumasar, *De revolutionibus annorum mundi*, English (37r–48r); Sacrobosco, *De sphaera*, English (48r–54r); « Here mayst þ^u know in how many maner an astronomyer may arre in 4 maner thingis... » (54r–56v); sign-book « Aryes is þe fyrst syngne of þe zodiake... » (57r–59v); Hermes/Enoch, *Liber imaginum signorum*, English (60r–61r); « Of nativites. Profithith hym not after þ^t dresse... » (61v–70r); « Haly Abenragell of nat-ivites>. This chapter if of nativites of childer taken out Haly Abenragell... » (70r–72r); canons of astronomical tables « Canon de Sole. To know and finde the mene mote... » (72r–74v); « For to knowe þe state of a seke man. This chapter is of knowinge of þe state of a seke man... » (75r–78r); « As I had loked and weyn of ... [blank] of planetis I fonde Mercuri... » (78r–83v); **Abraham Avenezre, *De revolutionibus annorum mundi* and Alkindi (?), *Liber de iudiciis revolutionum annorum mundi*, abridged version (83v–85r)**; *Astronomia Ypocratis*, English (85r–86r); « For to fynde the VII planetis... » (86r); table: elections from the aspects of the Moon with the other planets (86v); Bartholomaeus de Paczków, *Commentum in Ephemeridem Regiomontani*, English (87r–93r); astrological chapters « This forsaid tabi lis callid tabula Lune... » (93r–98v and 101r–101v); Guillelmus Anglicus, *De urina non visa* (99r–100r); Gergis, *De significatione septem planetarum in domibus* attr. Ptolemy (102r–103v); « Incipit liber Zael. Incipiunt significationes planetarum per signa secundum Zael philosophum. Saturnus cum fuerit in signis hominum... » (103v); « Liber Zael de coniunccionibus. Coniunccio est quando due planete merguntur in eodem signo... » (103v–104r); Michael Scot, *De noticia ordinum stellarum fixarum celi seu ymaginum* 48, incomplete (104r–107v); Albumasar (?), *Liber similitudinum* attr. Ptolemy (108r–110v); « Forma de nova intrumentur (!) navicula dicto pro horis equalibus ubicunque in tota terra inveniendis. In hoc intrumento due figure zodiaci... » (111r); Messahallah, *Epistola de rebus eclipsium*, beginning only (111v), followed without a break by « Item Aristoteles: Notandum est quod principatus planetarum in conceptione humana... » (111v–112r); « Tabulatus 12 signorum. Aries calidus et siccus, masculum, diurnum... » (112r–112v); note « De dominatore

rei s... (?). Cum scire volueris dominatorem rei... » (112v); Bethen, *Centiloquium* c. 2–32 (112v). Blank: fols. 3v, 100v.

LIT.: Neil R. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, vol. I: London, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1969, p. 212–215; John D. North, « The Longitudes of Winchester », *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-âge Grec et Latin*, 73 (2002), p. 13–20 (13–14); John D. North, « Winchester 1067 », *Centaurus*, 45 (2003), p. 130–141; Catherine Eagleton, *Monks, Manuscripts and Sundials. The Navicula in Medieval England*, Brill, Leiden 2010 (History of Science and Medicine Library, 13; Medieval and Early Modern Science, 11), p. 171–172.

II. EDITION AND TRANSLATION OF THE LATIN TEXT

II.1. *Introduction* (Carlos Steel)

MS Vatican, BAV, Pal. lat. 1407 (V) is the only manuscript that has preserved Bate's translation of the treatises of Ibn Ezra and 'Alkindi' on the revolutions of the year.¹⁵⁰ One finds the translation in the oldest part of the MS (fols. 9r–71v), which was copied in the late fourteenth century. The translation comes after Albumasar, *Flores* (9r–18r); Zael, *Fatidica* (18r–38r); Albumasar, *De revolutionibus annorum mundi* (38r–55r) and is followed by Henry Bate's own *De diebus creticis* (63r–71v). There is no title, and the scribe was uncertain what to make of the series of texts he found in his model after Albumasar's treatise. Instead of a title he simply wrote: « Sequitur capitulum uel sequuntur capitula, sed non inueni plus ». A later scholar, who also annotated the text (V²), having noticed the colophon at the end, wrote in the margin « liber Jacob Alkindi de reuolutionibus annorum mundi », and in the margin of the first 'Alkindi' text « Alius tractatus Alkindi ». The colophon unambiguously attributes the translation of the 'Alkindi' texts to Henricus Bate:

Explicit liber de iudiciis reuolutionum annorum mundi quem compilauit Iacob filius Ysaac Alkindi. Expletus est libellus iste ascendente Cancro, in quo Luna coniuncta Ioui, die tertia Septembris anno domini 1278° in Mechlinia, translatus ex Hebrayco in Latinum per Henricum Bate ad preces Iohannis de Milana.

The use of astrological references to date a translation is characteristic of the colophons of Bate's translations.¹⁵¹ The translation was made « at the request of Johannes van Milanen ». We know that Johannes was for many years alderman (*scabina*) of the city of Mechelen and that he was related to Henricus. He probably was his uncle on his mother's side.¹⁵² The colophon surprisingly only indicates that Bate translated the 'Alkindi' texts from Hebrew into Latin. Yet, there is no doubt that Bate also translated the first text by Ibn Ezra, as it shows the same translation method as the 'Alkindi' treatises. Thus, one finds double translations of a same Hebrew term, which is characteristic of all Bate's translations.¹⁵³ Moreover, there are in this first text similarities with terms and phrases used by Bate in his other

¹⁵⁰ For a description of this MS see the contribution of David Juste, who first noticed this so far unknown translation of Bate.

¹⁵¹ See for a survey of the colophons, see David Juste in STEEL et al. (eds.) *The Astrological Autobiography*, p. 49–54.

¹⁵² See *Ibid.*, p. 35, n. 38 and p. 39 n. 69.

¹⁵³ See *Ibid.*, p. 37. For more arguments to attribute the first part of the translation to Bate, see Sela's introduction, p. 38–39

works. Thus, §6.1:6 « et re uera mirabile est »: cf. *Nativitas* 1266 « et re uera mirabile est », or « uniuersaliter » (§1.1:1), « experior » (§2.2:2) with a direct object or « sustentari super » (§3.3:2 and §4.1:1) are frequently used by Bate in other translations. Noticeable is also the translation of the equator as « linea equalis sive medium mundi » (§3.3:3), cf. *De rationibus*, MS Leipzig, UB 1466, where equator is translated as « equalis lineae siue equinoctialis » (62v) « linea equalis » (62v), « in medio celi » (63r). One can also notice similarities in Bate's translation of *Ṭe'amim* I, §1.5:12–14 (Leipzig 1466, f. 62ra) and our text §2.5:8–9:

Saturnus uero *quia remotus a terra*, propter hoc lumen eius non est generatium caloris secundum proportionem *temperamenti conuenientis homini*, quamquam lumen per se generatium sit caloris. Cuius exemplum est hoc quod dicunt sapientes medicine quod *caro bouina frigida est*; et uerum dicunt secundum quod comparatur ad corpus humanum. Est tamen calida secundum quod est caro.

(§2.5:8–9) Non dixerunt autem de Luna quod sit frigida nisi quia caliditatem non generat humane complexionis temperamento similem seu *conuenientem*. Secundum quod dixerunt medici carnes bouinas frigidas esse et scitum est quod omnis caro calida est nisi quod respectu *temperamenti* complexionis humane ipsa frigida est et ei nociua. Consimiliter ergo et Saturnus *quia ualde remotus est a terra* et corpus eius ita grande non est ut corpus Iouis, idcirco dixerunt et ipsum esse frigidum. (MS Leipzig, fol. 62ra)

One finds even a 'signature' of Bate himself in this first part, in a note added after the tables on the « mansiones lune ». In the second table Ibn Ezra gives a list of the 28 mansions with their zodiacal names and the degrees, minutes and seconds that each contains. On the right side of the table it is indicated whether the mansions are temperate, dry or humid. This table ends with the following note: « Note that there are six mansions that are principally humid, according to the evidence provided by Al-Kindī, and that Ibn Ezra enumerates only those as humid, although other mansions are moderately humid, and they have been indicated here ». The scholar who made this note can obviously not be Ibn Ezra himself, as he refers to him. It is most probably the translator Henricus Bate who added it. He noticed that, in this table, Ibn Ezra only marked six mansions as humid and that he thus followed the view of 'Alkindi' in the second treatise (III, § 13). However, one may also characterise five other mansions as 'humid' though they are only moderately humid. As the note says, these supplementary humid mansions have been « indicated here » (« et sunt ille que hic sunt significate »): *hic*, that is, in this *tabula*. And indeed, for the mansions 7, 10, 15, 19 and 20, which are « temperate », one finds in the margin, for each case, added « + humida » with, in the fifth case, also added « secundum Hispalensem et Indorum tempora ». As those additions are in the same hand as the main text, the scribe of V must have found them in the margin of the exemplar he used, which is probably Bate's own MS. The scholar

[Bate] who added these supplementary *humidas* did so because he had compared Ibn Ezra's list with what he found in the *Epitome* of (pseudo-)John of Seville. In fact, the author of the *Epitome* characterizes also mansions 7, 10, 15, 19 and 20 as *humida*.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, the author also refers to the 'Indians' for this view: « Indi dicunt quod mansiones que pluviam significant sunt 11 » (6+5 additional). There is no doubt that Bate compared the list of the mansions with the *Epitome* of the Hispalensis, as he himself says in the note. Moreover, the second list has a title « Tabula mansionum Lune correcta iuxta concordantiam philosophorum ». Again, it seems to have been the translator, not Ibn Ezra, who added this title, or at least its last part « iuxta concordantiam philosophorum ». In fact, it is only with the additional references to Hispalensis that this table has become a 'concordance'. Moreover, the use of the term '*philosophi*' for astrologers definitely points to Bate and not to Ibn Ezra. As one can notice in his *Nativitas*, Bate constantly refers to the astrologers as philosophers.¹⁵⁵ That Bate had a particular interest in the *mansiones lunae* is also clear from an annotation in his translation of Ibn Ezra's '*Olam I (De mundo)*'. At § 62 (« Sapientes Indorum »), which one finds in MS Leipzig, UB 1466, most probably a copy of an exemplar that belonged to Bate: « illud capitulum est de m(ansionibus) supra (quas) Iacob Alkindi in libro reuolutionum ».¹⁵⁶ This note, which Bate may have added to his own copy, undoubtedly refers to the second 'Alkindi' text in this edition.¹⁵⁷

If Bate is the translator of the first text and even shows that he knows that it comes from Ibn Ezra, it remains puzzling that he does not mention Ibn Ezra in the colophon. Did he consider the first text as an introduction to the 'Alkindi' texts? After all, when Bate started translating, al-Kindī was better known among Latin scholars than Ibn Ezra. Yet, his translation project in Mechelen, which started in 1273, when Bate had obtained his first ecclesiastical prebend, is almost entirely devoted to the work of Ibn Ezra. It included, however, also a translation from the Hebrew of Albumasar's *De revolutionibus annorum* for 'Le livre Even-Massar des revolucions du siecle' is found among Hagins' translations of Ibn Ezra in MS Paris,

¹⁵⁴ See BURNETT, « Weather forecasting », p. 249–253.

¹⁵⁵ In the preface Bate declares that he will follow the « judgments of the philosophers » (*Nat.* 19–21: « inducam ad meipsum alios iudices, puta philosophos ueritatis amatores cum sententiis suis et iudiciis »). That these philosophers are in fact astrologers is clear from what follows. See *Nat.* 96–97: « Nam, ut testantur philosophi supra nominati cum aliis non nominatis hic » (i.e. Albumasar, Ptolemy, Hermes, Ibn Ezra) or *Nat.* 283–285 « Signa autem dominorum suorum significationes gerunt, ut uolunt philosophi »).

¹⁵⁶ See on these notes in the Leipzig MS my forthcoming edition «Henry Bate's Translation of Ibn Ezra's treatise *The Book of the World. A Critical Edition*», in MARIENZA BENEDETTO (ed.), *Le stelle, i regni, le credenze e le masse. L'astrologia politica nel Mediterraneo fra Medioevo e Rinascimento*, Pagina – Brepols, Bari – Turnhout (forthcoming).

¹⁵⁷ One may notice also the presence of two treatises on rain and weather forecasting (by Japhar and by Zael) in MS Paris BNF, n.a.l. 3091, a manuscript that probably was Bate's own personal copy.

BNF fr. 24276. Bate must have discovered a precious collection of Hebrew manuscripts that originated from Ibn Ezra, which may even have included some early Latin translations. Yet, it remains puzzling why Bate started translating this tripartite collection and why he did not refer to Ibn Ezra in his colophon.

II.1.1. The Transmission of the Text

The *Vaticanus* MS is the only witness of the Latin text. There is, however, an English translation of an abridged compilation of the text made by an English scholar in the late fifteenth century (London, Royal College of Physicians, 384): see the edition by Philipp Nothaft in this study. I compared for my edition the Latin with the English version when available and noticed only a few variant readings: see n. 41 numerum] month (mensem ?), 63 radium] degrees (gradum?), 52 dispositionem] « of the Mone » added, 58 and 59 transposition of terms. These variants do not as such exclude that the English scholar used the *Vaticanus* version for his translation, for they could have been errors, additions, or interpretations of this scholar. More important are several numerical variants in the calculation, which are discussed by Nothaft and Juste, in particular in §7.1:22, where the Latin reads 6°05' Capricorn, but the English version has 10°05'. They seem to exclude that the English version is based upon V. Moreover, it is implausible that this scholar ever had access to the *Vaticanus* manuscript, which originated in Germany and never left Germany. Moreover, the content of the London MS is entirely different from that of V.

The scribe of V refers in three instances to a variant reading. See n. 29: 34.24] in aliis 48.13 *mg.* V, 55 radio] in al' aspectu *mg.* V, 60 aquatico] in alio Aquarii *mg.* V. One should not conclude from these few instances that the scribe had access to another copy of the text. Most probably he found the variant readings in his model, which may have been Bate's own copy. A later scholar (V²), who added the titles with reference to al-Kindī, also made some corrections in the text: they are almost always *Verschlimmbesserungen* except the conjectural addition of 'et Saturni', which is confirmed by the English version (see n. 64).

An important indirect witness of the text is Pierre d'Ailly. In his *De concordantia discordantium astronomorum* (1415) he quotes a long text from the first treatise attributed to al-Kindī (§ 4–6). Pierre observes that astrologers have very divergent views about what constellation is related to what region or city on earth and he gives some examples of this divergence: « ex variis sapientum dictis pauca exempli gratia recitabo. Sicut ergo refert Jacobus Alkindi libro de iudiciis annorum mundi dicit Enoch qui et Hermes ». Follows the complete text of § 4–6.¹⁵⁸ It is highly improbable that Pierre had himself a manuscript of Bate's translation. In *De concordia* he heavily relies upon Bate's lost commentary on Albumasar's *De magnis*

¹⁵⁸ I use the magnificent edition of Johannes de Westfalia, Leuven c. 1477–1483, sig. ii2r–v.

coniunctionibus, as he himself acknowledges.¹⁵⁹ Pierre must have found the long quotation from this very rare translation in that commentary. From the same lost commentary come also the other authorities that Pierre mentions after the ‘Alkindi’ text: « Preterea Abraham Avenasre de hiis sparsim multa loquitur in Ysagogis suis, quas vocatur Inicium sapientie, sed ultra hec in libro suo coniunctionum refert ita: Dicit Enoch primus quod Iupiter cum Cancro significat super terram Alaerat, id est Herachie, Saturnus vero cum Libra... » (cf. ‘*Olam* I, § 56).¹⁶⁰

I collated my edition of §4–6 with the quotation in *De concordia* (as found in the edition): besides typographical errors most variant readings are found in the spelling of the names of cities and regions. Only in one case I wondered whether Pierre may have had a better reading:

II, §4:6–7 Leo uero cum Marte super illos qui morantur in climate septimo; Luna uero cum Virgine super partes Alsin] Leo et Virgo cum Marte super eos qui morantur in climate septimo. Luna uero cum Virgine super eos qui morantur in parte Alsin
Pierre d’Ailly.

« et Virgo », however, is probably an error for « uero »; and the longer version « super eos qui morantur in parte Alsin » seems to have arisen from what was said before: « super illos qui morantur in climate septimo ».

So, Pierre only is an indirect witness of Bate’s translation. After all, it is surprising that there still exists a manuscript of this rare text. The *Vaticanus* is most probably a direct copy made from a manuscript that belonged to Bate himself. One may even assume that the scribe not only found the ‘Alkindi’ translation in that manuscript, but also Bate’s *De diebus creticis*, which follows, and even the other preceding texts, including Zael and Albumasar’s *De revolutionibus annorum* closely related to the ‘Alkindi’ texts. I collated some pages of *De diebus creticis* and of the *Fatidica* of Zael with editions of these texts and had to conclude that the text in V has very few particular mistakes. This shows not only the professional quality of the scribe but also that he may have used a very good exemplar.

¹⁵⁹ See *Elucidarium*, c.19 (sig. ff2r): « Nota quod ibi [that is in his commentary on differentia I, *De magnis coniunctionibus*] dicit Henricus de Machlinia quod Albumasar magnam facit vim de signis orbium et dominiis eorum, necnon de consequentibus ad hoc ». On this lost commentary, see David Juste in STEEL et al. (eds.) *The Astrological Autobiography*, p. 48.

¹⁶⁰ Pierre refers to ‘*Olam* I as *Liber Coniunctionum* as does Bate himself.

II.1.2. Principles of the edition

It is always difficult to edit a text that is based on only one manuscript – in this case a copy of the late fourteenth century. I have, however, the impression that the scribe of V was very accurate and made few mistakes, like omissions. The editor's interventions are very limited. I compared the Latin text with the English version (L) and indicated in the apparatus those variants that may indicate that the English was based on another Latin MS.

This is not a diplomatic edition where one follows scrupulously the peculiarities of a single manuscript. Punctuation and paragraphing are mine. For the spelling of the proper names I follow V. However, I do not follow the scribe in an occasional 'set' for 'sed' or 'velud' for 'velut'. I do not introduce diphthongs (æ or œ) and do not distinguish between -u/v-, using -u- for both the vowel -u- and the consonant -v-, while keeping V- only for capitals. More difficult was a decision about the ending of words on -cio or -tio, -cia or -tia. It is often difficult to distinguish in V -t- from -c-, and for many '-tio' words an abbreviation is used ('*oppositio*' for instance). Of course, a scribe of the fourteenth century would write '*reuolucio*, *disposicio*, *significacio*, *inicia*' and '*eciam*' if he did not use abbreviations. I kept nevertheless these terms in their standard dictionary form

II.2 *Edition of the Latin Text*
(Carlos Steel)

< I. ABRAHAM AVENEZRA: DE REVOLUTIONIBUS ANNORUM MUNDI >¹⁶¹

< 1. De corporibus supercelestibus >

1. (1) {55} Inter sapientes non est discensio quin¹⁶² omnia generabilia colligata sint corporibus supercelestibus, quorum uirtus uniuersaliter in omnia influit inferiora. (2) Nam anime uiuentium omnium <sunt> sicut forme procedentes a motoribus orbium et lumine stellarum fixarum ac erraticarum. (3) Secundum autem quod planete maiores et propinquiores terre fuerint, secundum hoc magis apparebit fortitudo¹⁶³. (4) Propter quod dicit **Ptolomeus** quod si planeta fuerit in inferiori parte orbis ecentrici siue in opposito augis, apparebit eius fortitudo super terram magis quam si fuerit prope augem sui circuli, et idcirco non est locus habitabilis in parte terre meridiana propter fortitudinem caloris Solis, quia maior est inter alias stellas que uidentur. (5) Concordati sunt etiam precipui sapientes quod anima humana colligata est orbi signorum in quo sunt stelle fixe. (6) Et hic est orbis octauus a terra. Suntque omnes stelle eius diuise in 48 ymagines, de quibus uiginti una uersus septemtrionem sunt ab orbe signorum et 15 uersus meridiem et 12 in orbe magno, qui est cingulum orbis signorum. (7) Vocauerunt quamlibet harum 12 partium siue diuisionum nomine ymaginis que propinqua est ei in orbe illo. (8) Luna uero et alii quinque planete aliquando sunt in media linea orbis signorum et aliquando egrediunt ab illa paucis gradibus ad dextram et etiam a<d> sinistram. (9) Sol uero tantum seruat mediam lineam orbis illius semper.

< 2. De naturis planetarum >

1. (1) Antequam autem de coniunctionibus planetarum sermo fiat, loquamur de naturis ipsorum. (2) Palam quidem est quod sapientes per rationes ostenderunt naturam stellarum non esse igneam, quia celum et quidquid in eo est compositum non est, sed est simplex, propter quod in se ipso permanet semper et non augetur nec minuetur neque transmutabuntur aliququaliter in se ipsis ille creature sublimes. Vnde Psalmista de ipsis loquens inquit: *Statuit ea in seculum seculi*.

2. (1) Queritur autem hic difficilis questio quare scilicet dixerunt sapientes iudiciorum astrorum quod Luna est frigida et Mars calidus qui totus est igneus. (2) Aliqui etiam dicunt: ista experti sumus et ita inuenimus quod hec stella

¹⁶¹ *Titulum add. editor. Sequitur capitulum uel sequuntur capitula, sed non inueni plus supra textum scr. V liber Jacob Alkindi de reuolutionibus annorum mundi alio atramento scriptum mg.*^{V2}

¹⁶² *prius quoniam sed exp. V*

¹⁶³ *prius fortune sed exp. V*

calorem generat et illa frigus. (3) **Ptolomeus** uero dicit quod Luna est frigida et humida ob hoc quod est propinqua terre, a qua humiditas magna ad ipsam peruenit. (4) Dicit etiam quod Sol est nature calide et quia calidi est ascendere, idcirco Mars est calidus. Saturnus uero, quia remotus est ab aliis planetis, ob hoc est frigidus. Et quia Iupiter est in medio calidi et frigidi, ideo est temperatus.

3. (1) Dicit **Iacob Alkindi** quod 4 signa sunt initia reuolutionum tropicarum et quia calidum est actiuum, propter hoc dictum est quod Aries est calidus. (2) Calidum enim et frigidum actiua sunt. Et quando Sol est in directo signi Arietis, ipse est ascendens respectu habitationis nostre et tunc germinant plante et mouentur egritudines. (3) Et dixerunt quod signum Cancri est frigidum. Frigidum quoque est actiuum similiter.

4. (1) Propterea dixerunt alii quod ex proportionalitatibus sunt excepta iudicia astrorum. (2) Nam proportionalitas orbis Iouis ad orbem Solis et ad orbem Lune et ad terram est proportio amicitie. (3) Contrarium uero huius est de proportione Saturni et Martis. {55v} (4) Est enim Lune sicut 12 et Veneris et Mercurii sicut 14 et Solis 18, Martis 20, Iouis 24 et Saturni 32.

5. (1) Veritas autem est quod lumen quodlibet generatiuum est caloris et quia corpus Lune minus est quam corpus terre, corpus uero Solis est maius terra 166 uicibus, idcirco est Sol caloris magni generatiuus. (2) Quia uero natura caloris parui, qui remissus est, laxatiua est et fluefactiua, ob hoc lumen suo calore, qui paruus est, augmentationem habet humiditatis¹⁶⁴ et non ita Sol. (3) Venus etiam propinqua est nature Lune, quia lumen eius magnum est, et est etiam propinqua terre, propter quod ambe significatiue sunt pluuię. (4) Mercurius quidem, quia paruus est, consimiliter alteratur. Nam lumen eius paruum est. (5) Iupiter autem, quia maior est omnibus planetis post Solem et est remotus a terra, propter hoc generatiuus est caliditatis et humiditatis temperate que in natura uite. (6) Et quia Sol desiccatiuus est propter excellentiam caloris et Mars est magnus et orbis eius propinquus, ideo¹⁶⁵ calorem magnum generat. (7) Et dixerunt quod hec est natura eius et ratio sue actionis uel operationis. (8) Saturnus uero quia remotus a terra, propter hoc lumen eius non est generatiuum caloris secundum proportionem temperamenti conuenientis homini, quamquam lumen per se generatiuum sit caloris. (9) Cuius exemplum est hoc quod dicunt sapientes medicine quod caro bouina frigida est; et uerum dicunt secundum quod comparatur ad corpus humanum. Est tamen calida secundum quod est caro.

6. (1) Quoniam autem inuenerunt naturam signorum per comparisonem ad res inuentas super terram, dixerunt Arietem esse calidum et †siccum temperatum†,

¹⁶⁴ humiditates V

¹⁶⁵ prius satis sed exp. V

ab eo similiter quintum¹⁶⁶ et nonum, Taurum autem frigidum et siccum et signum Geminorum secundum figuram humanam calidum et humidum, et Cancrum frigidum et humidum, ut est aque natura. (2) Et non est necesse hic prolongare sermonem quia ueritas proportionis in aspectibus est, nec est in hoc discordia. Aries enim, Leo et Sagitarius calidi et sicci sunt, Taurus, Virgo et Capricornus frigidi et sicci sunt, Gemini, Aquarius et Libra calidi et humidi, Cancer, Scorpio et Pisces frigidi sunt et humidi. (3) Amplius concordati sunt omnes quod Luna est terre propinqua et super naturam nati significat secundum habitudinem loci sui et secundum quod alii ipsam aspiciunt. (4) Mercurius uero super discretionem rationis significat et super animam humanam, Venus autem, quia alte locata est, super appetitum continuandi speciem, Sol quidem sicut cor in humano corpore, in quo quidem corde anima auget calorem¹⁶⁷; ob hoc ergo relatam est cor ad Solem. Superiores uero planete significare habent super uniuersalia. Saturnus quidem super gentem antiquam et regnum antiquum, Iupiter uero super gentem nouam et regnum nouum, sed Mars significans est bellorum et uictoriarum. Non uidetur autem accidere quod regna renouentur nisi per bella.

< 3. De coniunctionibus >

1. (1) Cum autem coniunctiones omnes planetarum omnium considerauiamus, nos inuenimus eas centum et 20, quoniam de duobus sunt 21, similiter est de 5, et de 3 35 et ita est de 4, de 6 uero 7, et sunt omnes secundum numerum septenarii, multiplicant super numeros impares per duplicationem et non est aliquis numerus **nisi** 7 et post qui septenalis (?) sit. Coniunctio uero de 7 una est.

2. (1) Radix quidem autem significationum uniuersalium est secundum duos superiores planetas et principium coniunctionis eorum est in Ariete. (2) Et post 20 annos coniunguntur in Sagitario et post alios 20 annos in Leone; <...>¹⁶⁸ et ita faciunt 12 uicibus aut 13. (3) Et hoc erit in 240 annis aut in 260 annis. (4) Et post signa ignea mutantur ad signa terrea secundum uiam et modum quem in igneis habuerunt. (5) Et post hoc mutantur ad signa aerea, post ea uero ad aquea. (6) Et coniunctio in triplicitate uocata¹⁶⁹ est magna coniunctio. (7) Coniunctio uero 20 annorum {56^r} est minor coniunctio.

3. (1) Non est possibile homini minutum coniunctionis ipsorum inuenire propter tarditatem motus eorum. (2) Loca quidem enim planetarum inuenta sunt per instrumenta probationum, in quibus secunda designari non poterant. (3) Vnde sapientes iudiciorum astrologie sustentati sunt supra reuolutionem anni mundi et

¹⁶⁶ quintum [idest Leonem] coni. David Juste mar(.)um V?

¹⁶⁷ calorem conieci: m..erem V

¹⁶⁸ lacunam indicavi, cf. 'Olam I, §8:3: « Et post 60 annos a coniunctione prima coniungunt se denuo in signo Arietis in quo inceptum primo »

¹⁶⁹ uocata correxi (cf. « clepid » L): nota V

super ascendens in loco lineae equalis siue medii mundi, amplius et super ascendens cuiuslibet loci secundum longitudinem eius et latitudinem, iuxta quod scriptum est in Libro Tabularum. (4) Porro **Ptolomeus** dicit quod ab hora coniunctionis luminarium uel oppositionis eorum que fuerit ante reuolutionem anni dependet iudicium ipsius anni et huic conmiscetur quolibet anno coniunctio ipsorum luminarium aut oppositio proximo precedens introitum Solis in signa mobilia. (5) Et est etiam necessarium cum omni studio scire gradum ascendentem in quolibet loco hora coniunctionis luminarium aut oppositionis eorum in mense in quo coniungentur duo superiores, et hec est ueritas.

4. (1) Et scias quod signum Iudeorum est Aquarius et Leo Christianorum, Sarracenorum uero Scorpio. (2) Dixerunt quoque experimentatores quod constellatio Sarracenorum est Venus cum Scorpione. Nam in termino Veneris fuit coniunctio secte Sarracenorum. (3) Plures etiam sapientum aspiciunt super coniunctionem Saturni et Martis qui accidit omnibus 30 annis in signo Cancri.

< 4. De iudiciis annorum mundi >

1. (1) Incipiemus ergo nunc loqui de iudiciis annorum mundi. (2) Et primo quidem inhibemus ne sustenteris super diuisiones que sunt 2000 annorum secundum gradus circuli neque super 2000 secundum numerationes signorum neque super 2000 secundum numerationes planetarum. (3) Nam hoc totum nichil est nisi cogitationis destructio nec est etiam proficuum alicui legere libros iudicatiuos super annorum decennios et centenarios et 2000rios. (4) Scire[s] debes quod iudicia mundi sunt res pluuiarum et anni famis et egritudinum et bellorum necnon mutationum regnorum.

< 5. De mansionibus Lune >

1. (1) Et oportet quidem rememorari mansionum Lune significantium super pluuias necnon et mansionum siccitatem significantium (2) Et ponam figuram earum et nomina secundum linguam Arabicam.

2. (1) Prima mansio Alnethath, idest cornua que sunt Arietis, et sunt 3 stelle de magnitudine tertia sic deposite ∴ (2) Secunda¹⁷⁰ mansio Albathin, idest uenter paruus Arietis, et sunt 3 stelle parue de magnitudine quarta ∴. (3) Tertia Althiri et sunt Plyades et est cauda Arietis; sex sunt ibi stelle de magnitudine quarta ∴∴ (4) Quarta Aldebaran et est stella clara et rubicunda de magnitudine prima ∴∴∴ et est oculus Tauri. (5) Quinta Alhaka¹⁷¹, Caput Geminorum, et sunt tres stelle parue inter duas claras ∴ de magnitudine secunda. (6) Sexta Alhanaa iuxta Geminos et

¹⁷⁰ pro mansionem prima sicca mg scriba notavit, pro mansionem 3 et 4 humida, pro 6 sicca, pro 7 humida, pro 9 sicca, pro 10, 12, 15, 16 et 17 humida

¹⁷¹ Alhakath V

sunt tres stelle in similitudine sagitte de magnitudine tertia ∴ (7) Septima Aldarehen, idest brachium, et sunt due stelle clare iuxta Caput Geminorum inferius : (8) Octaua Alnatera, idest nasus Leonis, et sunt due¹⁷² stelle parue in similitudine nubis de magnitudine quarta ✧ (9) Nona Altheraf, idest oculus, et est oculus Leonis et sunt 3 stelle parue ∴ et tertia inferior est occulta de magnitudine quinta. (10) Decima Algabra, idest frons Leonis, et sunt 4 stelle de magnitudine tertia et quarta ∴ (11) Undecima Alzebra¹⁷³ et aliqui uocant eam Alcartan et est costa Leonis; sunt autem due stelle magna et parua honoris secundi et quinti : (12) Duodecima Alscarfa, idest cauda Leonis, stella una magna primi honoris. (13) Tredecima Allatua, sunt 4 stelle de magnitudine sexta et est superius una stella parua et clara :... (14) Quartadecima Alchemaaah et est Alcimec Allahasel, idest inermis, et ratio est quod non habet lances; est autem stella clara primi honoris . (15) Quintadecima Algaphar, tres stelle parue de magnitudine quarta ∴ et est lingua Libre. (16) Sextadecima Alzabena, et sunt lances Libre, due stelle clare secundi honoris .. (17) Decima septima Alkalil, et est corona Capitis Scorpionis, et sunt tres stelle de magnitudine tertia ... {56^v} (18) Decima octaua Alkalabe, idest cor Scorpionis, stella magna secundi honoris inter duas paruas lucidas ... (19) Decima nona Alxula, idest aculeus Scorpionis, due stelle quarti honoris et coniunguntur secum alie stelle parue (20) Vicesima Alnayn, sunt 8 stelle, 4 coniuncte ex una parte et 4 coniuncte¹⁷⁴ ab alia parte, superius autem est una clara, et sunt de magnitudine tertia et quarta ∴ (21) Vicesima prima Albalda et est in similitudine littere que apud Hebreos uocatur Heez subuerse, cuius pars superior posita est inferius et e conuerso, et sunt 6 stelle in forma arcus ∴... (22) Vicesima secunda Saadebach, et est hoc difficile scribere in lingua Hebrayca et significat eufortunium carnificis seu decollatoris, suntque tres stelle, una parua in medio duarum : (23) Vicesima tertia Saadeblac, et sunt due stelle, una quasi absorta a secunda et sunt due parue : (24) Vicesima quarta Saadealsaode, et sunt 2 stelle, una magna <et una parua,> et prope ipsas una parua ∴ (25) Vicesima quinta Saadealkabe, sunt 4 stelle quarum due impresse sunt insimul super duas que non tantum lucent sicut alie due ∴ (26) Vicesima sexta Alperaalaoul, idest urna aquarii, et sunt due stelle quarti honoris : (27) Vicesima septima Alperaue, idest urna posterior, et sunt due stelle urne aquarii meridionales : (28) Vicesima octaua Betnalhoz, idest uenter piscis, et sunt 7 stelle ordinate in similitudine corporis piscis suntque propinque orbi signorum.

3. Describam igitur tabulam ad sciendum que sunt mansiones et quot gradus quelibet contineat, et minuta similiter cum secundis. Correcta est hec tabula cuius distinctio est secundum octauam speram.

¹⁷² due V quod non consentit cum figura sequenti quae quinque habet stellas; sex in Abraham Bar Hiyya

¹⁷³ Aldebra V

¹⁷⁴ coniuncte iteravit V

Tabula mansionum lune¹⁷⁵ correcta iuxta concordantiam philosophorum¹⁷⁶

1 Aries Alnelbaf ¹⁷⁷ idest trusio* siue cornua	12.51.26 temperata
2 Aries Albatin	25.42. 51 sicca
3 Taurus Altari, idest Pliades	8.34.17 temperata
4 Taurus Aldebaran, idest Yades	4.2.26.43 humida
5 Gemini Alhaka idest cadens	4.17.9 temperata
6 Gemini Alhanaa ¹⁷⁸	17.8.34 sicca
7 Gemini Adraa	7.30.0.0 temperata (+ humida)
8 Cancer Alnath idest fugiens	12.51.26 temperata
9 Cancer Altarf ¹⁷⁹ idest expeditus siccus	25.42.51 sicca
10 Leo Algabeha idest frons	10.8.34.17 temperata (+ humida)
11 Leo Alzabra idest uirescens	21.25.43 temperata
12 Virgo Alzarfa ¹⁸⁰ idest comere	12.4.17.9 humida
13 Virgo Alaaua idest mustela	17.8.34 sicca
14 Virgo Alchemah idest spica	30.0.0 temperata
15 Libra Algefar ¹⁸¹ idest amarum	15.12.51.36 temperata (+ humida)
16 Libra Alzabena idest humida coniuncta	16.25.42.51 humida
17 Scorpio Allzalil idest corona	17.8.34.17 humida
18 Scorpio Alkiab idest siccus expeditus	21.25.43 sicca
19 Sagitarius Alxula idest disperditus	19.4.17.9 temperata (+ humida)
20 Sagitarius Alnayn idest delicie	17.8.34 temperata (+ humida)
(secundum Hispalensem et Indorum tempora)	
21 Sagitarius Alba<l>da idest terminus	30.0.0 temperata

¹⁷⁵ luna V

¹⁷⁶ nota quod scriba prius errorem fecit in numeratione 28 mansionum et postea quod scripsit deleuit et in margine scripsit « iste numerus superius positus non valet quia erravi scribendo »

¹⁷⁷ Alnebaf sed -l- s.v. V

¹⁷⁸ halanaf V

¹⁷⁹ altraf V

¹⁸⁰ alzarta V

¹⁸¹ algepar V

22 Capricornus Sadeldebac ¹⁸² idest serpens	20.12.51.26 humida
23 Capricornus Sadebalac idest gluciens	25.42.51 temperata
24 Aquarius Coodeakeode idest serpens clarus	8.34.17 temperata
25 Aquarius Cradealkade idest serpens siccus	21.25.43 sicca
26 Pisces Alpargor idest plaga sicca	4.17.9 sicca
27 Pisces A<l>praghenoth idest truncus fabe	17.8.34 humida
28 Pisces Alhoz idest pisces	30.0.0 temperata

4. Nota quod sex sunt mansiones humide principaliter, secundum quod testatur **Alkindus** et illas enarrat **Auenezre** solum pro humidis, licet alique alie sunt humide mediocriter et sunt ille que hic sunt significate.

< 6. De anno solari >

1. (1) Volumus autem nunc loqui de discordia que est inter tabulas antiquorum et posteriorum. (2) In hoc enim concordant antiqui quod annus solaris ueraciter contineat 365 dies et quartam diei {57^r} et adhuc centesimam uicesimam partem diei, unde supra 365 dies integros est augmentum reuolutionis 93 graduum secundum propinquitatem. (3) Sapientes uero Persarum dicunt quod in illo augmento superexcrecent 15 minuta gradus supra illos 93 gradus. (4) Et **Ptolomeus** dicit quod ab illa quarta diei superexcrecente deficit una trecentesima pars diei que ualet gradum unum et 12 minuta. (5) Post Ptolomeum uero surrexerant sapientes multi in diuersis temporibus considerantes et probantes annum solarem minorem esse per diminutionem minus centesime uicesime partis diei ab illa quarta superexcrecente. (6) Et re uera mirabile est unde tantus error euenire potest. Nam in 60 annis accidet differentia unius diei inter ponentes quantitatem maximam anni et alios qui ponunt eam minimam. (7) Et quilibet experiri potest per umbram necnon et per instrumenta probationum.

2. (1) Alii uero sapientes dixerunt esse duos circulos paruos in Capitibus Arietis et Libre et secundum hanc uiam dixerunt aliquando ascensum fieri et aliquando descensum (2) Et de hac quidem secta discordant¹⁸³ alii ab aliis. (3) Quidam autem dicunt motum illum usque ad 8 gradus pertingere. (4) Quidam uero magis se subtiliantes dicunt usque ad 10 gradus et duas tertias. (5) Indorum uero sapientes dicunt quod hic est motus stellarum fixarum, sed hoc nichil est. (6) Nam bene apparet quod **Ptolomeus** in tempore suo inuenit per instrumenta probationum Solem intrare caput Arietis cum dies equatur nocti in omnibus terre climatibus per

¹⁸² sahldebac V

¹⁸³ prius dixeruntque sed exp. V

8 dies postquam hoc fuit secundum compotum Indorum. (7) Propter quod dixit in Libro figurarum quod 8 gradus addendi sunt ad sciendum figuram reuolutionis orbis signorum. (8) Sed hiis diebus est e conuerso quia Sol intrat Caput Arietis et equatur dies nocti antequam ipsum secundum compotum Indorum per nouem dies. (9) Vnde in anno coniunctionis duorum superiorum in signo Virginis erant 8 gradus.

3. (1) Detegam autem nunc partem huius secreti. (2) Scito quod inter istos sunt due secte. (3) Alii enim principium anni accipiunt cum puncto equinoxii, siue motus ascensus et descensus uerus sit siue non. (4) Alii autem reuersionem Solis accipiunt ad directionem stelle fixe, siue moueatur orbis stellarum fixarum in 100 annis per gradum unum siue in 66 annis et¹⁸⁴ 8 mensibus siue in 70 annis aut non sit motus alius orbi stellato preter illum qui est ascensus et descensus. (5) Et numerus uel quantitas motus Solis a puncto ad eundem punctum est equalis preter quod mouetur orbis Solis cuius centrum extractum est a centro terre, quia motus augis eius est equalis motui stellarum fixarum. (6) Et de hiis ponam exempla. (7) Dicit **Ptolomeus** quod motus stellarum fixarum in anno est una pars de 100 partibus gradus que ualent 36 secunda et huic correspondent 3 gradus et 36 minuta in anno de motu reuolutionis celi. (8) Et dixit idem quod de quarta diei in anno solari deest una pars 300 partibus diei unius que ualet unum gradum et 12 minuta de reuolutione orbis. (9) Et cum iste numerus subtractus fuerit de 3 gradibus et 36 minutis, remanebunt duo gradus et uiginti quatuor minuta. (10) Eritque secundum hoc annus solaris a stella fixa usque quo reuertatur ad eandem cum augmento partis unius de 150 in die. (11) Sapientes uero Sarracenorum dixerunt motum stellarum fixarum esse unius gradus in sexaginta sex annis, et huic correspondent quinque gradus et uiginti septem minuta secundum modum predictum. (12) Dixerunt autem quod in anno solari est diminutio unius partis de 115 in die et huic correspondent 3 et 13. Cumque hoc subtractum fuerit ab illo quod motui stelle fixe correspondet, remanebunt duo et quatuor decem. (13) Alii quoque magistri probationum, perscrutatores intimi, motum stellarum fixarum inuenerunt in septuaginta annis¹⁸⁵ unius gradus esse, cui respondent quinque et nouem in anno, et secundum ipsorum compotum est diminutio anni solaris a quarta duo gradus et quadraginta quinque minuta. Cum uero subtrahitur hoc a numero supposito, remanebunt duo gradus et uiginti quatuor minuta, quemadmodum ponit **Ptolomeus**.

4. (1) Vniuersitas autem {57^v} sapientum astrorum punctum equalitatis diei et noctis appellant Caput signi Arietis, ob hoc quod ymago Arietis secundum uisum est ei propinqua. (2) Et partiti sunt ipsi signa reliqua secundum ymaginationem ad instar huius. (3) Indorum uero sapientes orbem signorum partiti sunt iuxta quod

¹⁸⁴ et correxi: in V

¹⁸⁵ prius gradus scr., sed exp. et annis s.v.V

uisui apparebat secundum quod experimentati sunt et probauerunt in iudiciis <per> generationem post aliam, et est illa partitio secundum ymagines uisas in orbe signorum, hoc est secundum speram octauam.

< 7. De coniunctione magna anni 1067 >

1. (1) Et cum inspiceremus ad coniunctionem magnam que fuit in signis terreis, nos inuenimus Saturnum in uiginti octo gradibus signi Sagitarii anno Arabum 438, et inuenimus in illo anno uersus finem, uidelicet anni Christi 1047, Iouem intrasse modicum in gradibus signi Capricorni secundum diuisionem signorum, et erant ambo in ymagine Sagitarii. (2) Propter quod erat principium anni coniunctionis illius anno Arabum 459 in uicesima quinta die mensis quarti, secundum Christianos uero quartadecima die Martii anno Christi 1067. (3) Et cum uellemus scire gradum ascendentem in loco lineae equalis, qui uocatus est Arym, (4) et iam scimus quod longitudo¹⁸⁶ Winconie ab occidente est decem et nouem graduum et quod eius longitudo a medio mundi est septuaginta unius graduum, qui ualent quatuor horas et quadraginta quatuor minuta hore, et est motus Solis equalis in hiis horis et minutis, undecim[i] minuta et quadraginta secunda, (5) nos inuenimus motum Solis in annis collectis 1049 et in expansis 17 perfectis et erat motus Solis medius 11 signa, 14 gradus, 46 minuta, 40 secunda, et minuebantur ab hoc 11 minuta et 40 secunda, et erit residuum undecim signa, 14 gradus, 34 minuta, 0 in secundis. (6) Nos quoque respeximus ad sciendum locum augis Solis ad quem habendum oportebit subtrahere triginta tres annos a mille centum annis qui sunt radix augium. (7) Et est motus augis in illis triginta tribus annis uiginti octo minutorum. Subtraximus hec a loco in tabula scripta, qui est duo signa, uiginti sex gradus et quatuordecim minuta, et remanserunt¹⁸⁷ duo signa uiginti, quinque gradus et quadraginta sex minuta. (8) Et erat equatio Solis unius gradus, quinquaginta octo minuta et quadraginta octo secunda¹⁸⁸. (9) Minuebamus hoc a principio Arietis et erat residuum 11 signa, 28 gradus, 1 minutum, 12 secunda. (10) Ab hoc quoque substraximus numerum suprapositum qui prouenit ex annis collectis et expansis et remanserunt 13 gradus, 27 minuta, 12 secunda. (11) A quo etiam subtraximus hoc quod in 13 diebus de motu Solis inuenimus et erat residuum 0.34.2¹⁸⁹. (12) Huic quoque secundum motum Solis correspondent 19 hore, 34 minuta et erat hec anni reuolutio in loco lineae lineae equalis [per 33 gradus et 30 minuta¹⁹⁰] et est gradus ascendens 25 et 24 minuta signi Arietis fuitque introitus Solis in Caput Arietis in hoc loco, qui est Winconia, per 14 horas et 50 minuta hore post medietatem diei et erant fractiones ille quinque sexte unius hore, que sunt 10 minuta, et hoc erat in

¹⁸⁶ longitudo: latitudo s.v.V²

¹⁸⁷ remanserint V

¹⁸⁸ secunda *correx*i: minuta V

¹⁸⁹ 34.24: in aliis 48.13 mg. V

¹⁹⁰ per-minuta] *delenda cens. Nothaft super -s et 30 signa expunctionis hab. V*

nona hora noctis secundum 312 gradus ascensionum terre et signum ascendens 9 gradus et 43 minuta signi Capricorni. (13) Et sunt loca planetarum, Solis scilicet 0.0.0, Lune 10.22.28, Capitis Draconis 5.11.30.14, Saturni 5.14.55 qui erat retrogradus, Iouis 5.2.1 retrogradi similiter, Martis 0.14.26, Veneris 0.7.15¹⁹¹ Mercurii 11.9.7. (14) Et hic est locus Saturni et Iouis in hora coniunctionis eorum secundum tabulas quas ego composui: Saturni 5.12.23.17, locus eius equatus 5.18.51, Iouis 5.18.22.46, locus eius equatus 5.18.51, Solis 5.18.54.41, locus eius equatus 5.16.57. (15) Equavi etiam loca planetarum secundum uiam compositionis **Albategni** et **Almamoni**, **Alzophi**, **Almazkar**, quia inter eos est discordia de loco augis Solis¹⁹² et hoc ideo est quia non est possibile inquisitorem scire locum augis nisi per instrumenta. (16) Et in hoc est difficultas {58^r} magna quia non potest fieri instrumentum in quo secunda possunt distingui. Et secundum quod multiplicantur anni, possibile est secunda excrescere ad quantitatem sensibilem. (17) Inueni quoque coniunctionem ipsorum in die qua coniunctus est Sol cum eis per duos dies, uidelicet post coniunctionem Saturni et Iouis, in uno gradu, uno quoque minuto, et erat hoc quinque diebus perfectis de mense Septembris anni 1067 secundum annos¹⁹³ Christianorum. (18) Et hoc est secundum annos Sarracenorum post uiginti tres dies mensis Zoal, qui est mensis decimus in numero ipsorum anni 459 a principio regni ipsorum. (19) Et hec sunt loca aliorum planetarum in die coniunctionis illius: Martis quidem 4.7.13, Veneris 4.9.5, Mercurii 6.12.25, Lune quoque 3.10.12 et erat Caput Draconis prope locum eius in die oppositionis. (20) Et necesse quidem habui scire oppositionem Lune cum Sole que fuit ante coniunctionem illam uicesimasexta die Augusti, motus Solis medius 5.11.1.26, motus Lune medius 11.7.50.24, portio uero Lune in media die illa 7.2.39 52. (21) Et erat oppositio in octo gradibus 59 minutis, uno secundo signi Piscium. Et locus Capitis Draconis in hora oppositionis 5.6.50.48. Et non erat latitudo Lune nisi undecim minutorum et propter hoc illud quod significat est perfectum. (22) Et ascendens in Winconia 18¹⁹⁴ gradus 7 minuta Libre et in linea equali 6¹⁹⁵ gradus 5 minuta signi Capricorni.

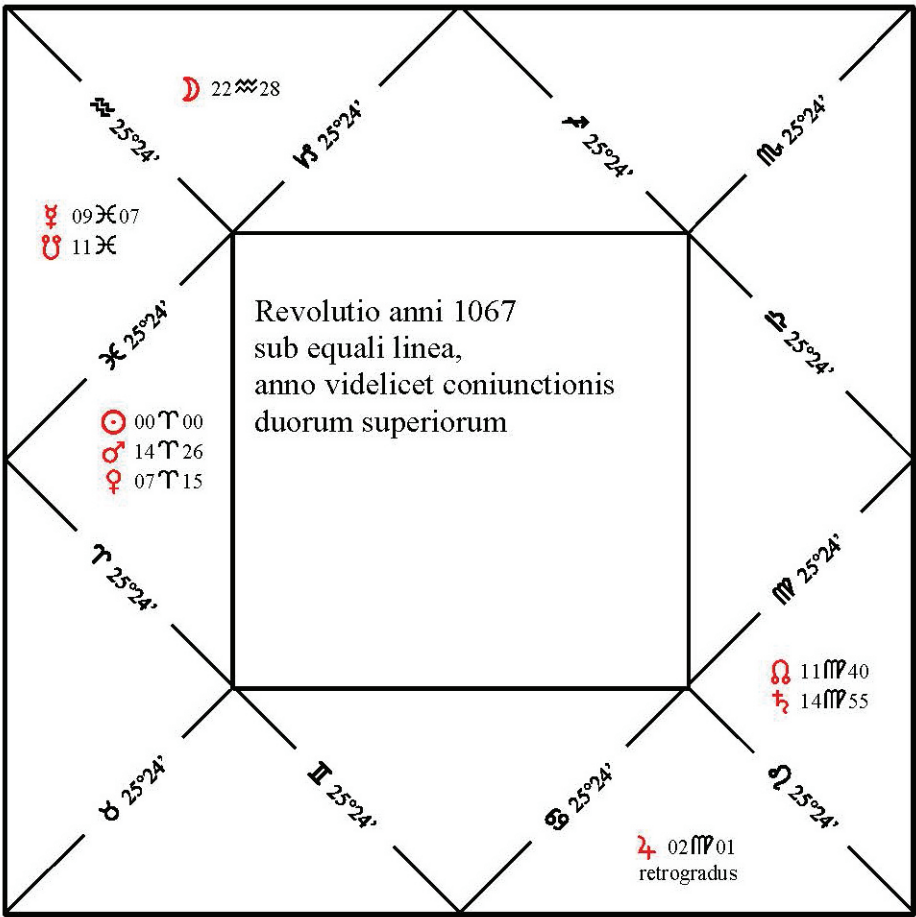
¹⁹¹ 0.7.15 V (*sed 0 uidetur correcta*): 17.16 Aris L melius esset 1.7.15 ut David Juste opinatur

¹⁹² Solis correxi: Iouis V

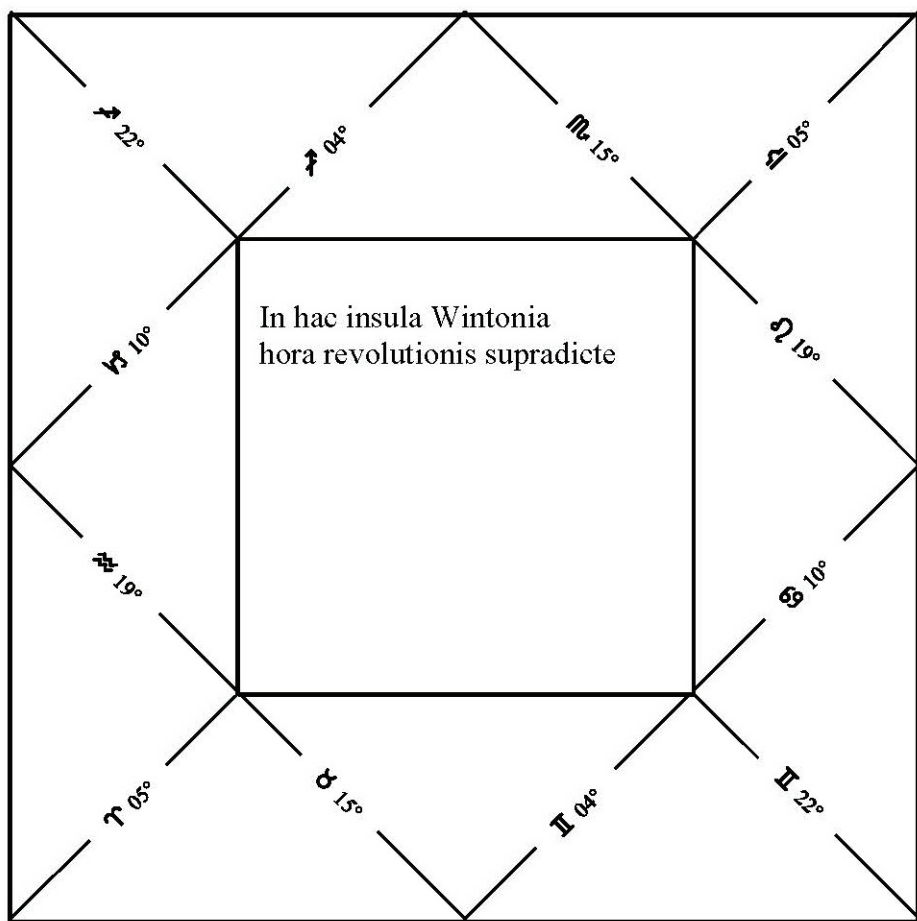
¹⁹³ annos iter. *sed corr.* V

¹⁹⁴ 18 V: 10 L

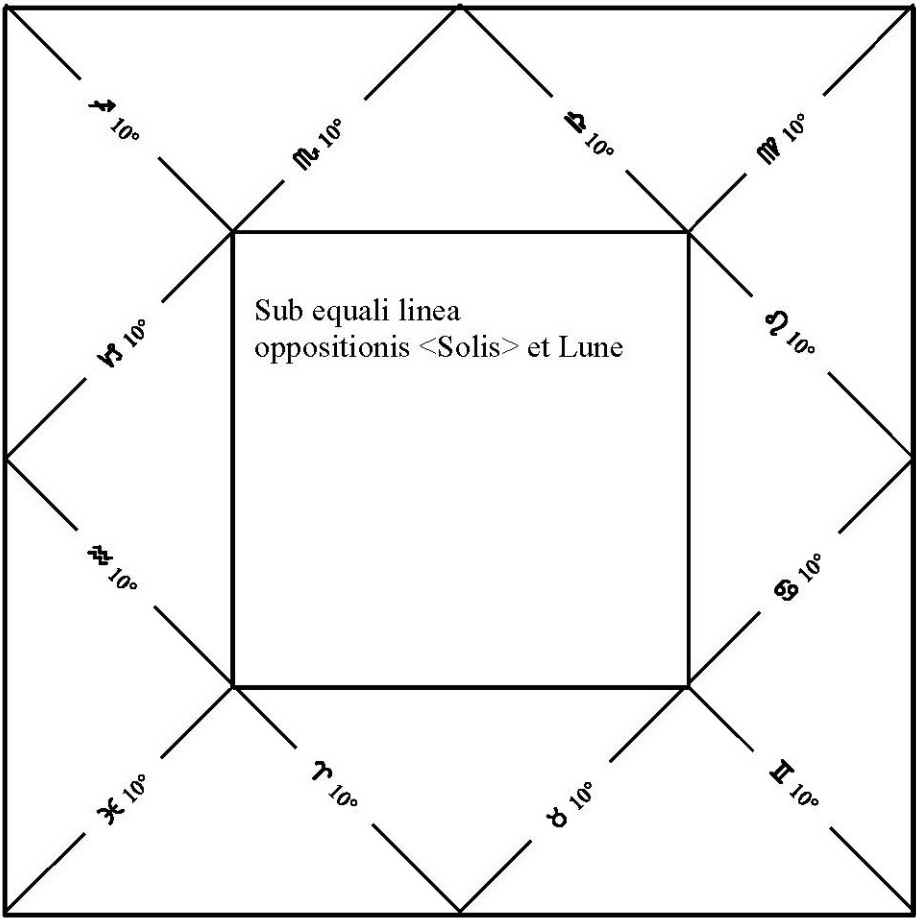
¹⁹⁵ 6. V (*sed .1. s.v.*): 10 L



Horoscope 1



Horoscope 2



Horoscope 3

< II. ALKINDI (?): LIBER DE IUDICIIS REVOLUTIONUM ANNORUM MUNDI,
TRACTATUS PRIMUS >¹⁹⁶

1. Dixit translator: Interpretabor quidem nunc tractatum unum ex Arabico in Hebraycum ydeoma de iudiciis annorum mundi quem collegit Iacob filius **Ysaac Alkindi**. Et hoc est initium sui tractatus.

2. (1) Quia concordati sunt omnes astrorum iudices quod uniuersalium iudicia seu communium dependent a coniunctione duorum superiorum, a principio incipiam¹⁹⁷ coniunctionis eorum in signis triplicitatum. (2) De signis enim igneis mutantur ad signa terrea. (3) Et tu debes aspicere ad figuram dispositionis orbis signorum. (4) Et scito signum coniunctionum cuiuslibet¹⁹⁸ de partibus terre seu regionibus. (5) Et {58^v} debes etiam attendere secundum quod melius poteris ad sciendum gradum ascendentem in hora introitus solis in signum seu figuram Arietis, et hoc tempus¹⁹⁹ subtrahendum est de tabulis, que facte sunt secundum uiam probationis²⁰⁰, 8 gradus, quadraginta quinque minuta et triginta secunda. (6) Et intrat Sol ymaginem signi Arietis inter uicesimum secundum diem Martii et uicesimum tertium. (7) Et equa planetas ad illum diem et horam et subtrahe numerum²⁰¹ supradictum de loco Lune et a locis reliquorum quinque planetarum. (8) Equa etiam uel precisius poteris coniunctionem luminarium seu oppositionem, utra eorum propinquior fuerit antequam Sol intrat principium signi Arietis in anno quo coniunguntur duo superiores. (9) Et considera signum gentis cuiuslibet et etiam signum cuiuslibet terre seu regionis qualiter scilicet se habeant ad signum coniunctionis et ad signum ascendens in hora coniunctionis Solis et Lune uel oppositionis eorum. (10) Et aspice similiter dispositionem planetarum et dominum signi gentis cuiuslibet et ciuitatis. (11) Est quoque necessarium ualde notitiam habere signi ascendentis in principio anni ut sciatur quis planeta est in angulo uel in succedenti angulum aut in ab angulo cadente, et qualiter se habeant planete ad Solem.

3. (1) Et semper compara Solem regibus et principibus²⁰² magnis aut magnatibus, Saturnum uero antiquis et terre cultoribus, et Iouem iudicibus et sacerdotibus, Martem uero militibus et belligeris necnon et cyrurgicis, Venerem mulieribus et medicis et eunuchis²⁰³, Mercurium uero sapientibus, scribis et mercatoribus, Luna<m> uero toti uulgo communiter.

¹⁹⁶ Alius tractatus Alkindi *add. mg. V*²

¹⁹⁷ incipiam *correx*i: inquam V

¹⁹⁸ cuiuslibet *correx*i: cuius est V

¹⁹⁹ tempore V

²⁰⁰ probationis *mg. add. V*

²⁰¹ numerum: month (mensem ?) L

²⁰² potentibus *mg. V*²

²⁰³ eunuchis *conieci*: inmisacis (?) V

4. (1) Dicit **Enoch**, qui est Hermes, quod signum Arietis et Iupiter significant super partes Alaerac idest Eracleam, que est in terra Persarum, et ibi est Babilonia et Baldac; (2) Saturnus uero cum signo Libre super Romam et terras Christianorum uel non circumcisorum; (3) et Sol cum signo[rum] Aquarii super terram Iudeorum, idest Iudeam, usque ad Egyptum; (4) et signum Capricorni cum Mercurio super terram Dalhenam, idest Indorum; (5) et Venus cum Scorpione super terram Cumanorum, idest Arabum; (6) Leo uero cum Marte super illos qui morantur in climate septimo; (7) Luna uero cum Virgine super partes Alsin.

5. (1) Sapientes quoque Babiloniorum locuti sunt super partes terre. (2) Et dixerunt quod Aries significat super Persiam et Ardenagaam et Galaciam et Philistin, idest Palestinam, et Babiloniam et Balgaam et Almussal, hoc est Assiriam; (3) Taurus super Assabeham et Mea et Caberas et Aziam Minorem et super montes Deberaz (et montes sunt magni ualde); (4) Gemini super Galaan et Margaan et Cebarastaan et Armeniam Maiorem et Adarnegerdaan et Bargan et Camaniaam et Alarquia et Abarabalini et super angulum Occidentis et Egypti et super terram Barca; (5) Cancer super Affricam et Philestin, idest Palestiniam, Parnessie et super terram Christianorum idest non circumcisorum et Romaniam et Armeniam Minorem et Orientem de Corasten et Marcam et Baldac et Alaerac; (6) Leo super terram Altmedioserath, idest terram Turcorum, et Bascetar et Ytaliam et Romam et Britanniam Maiorem et super terram Hemes et Damascum et regnum Assura et Atupa et Albostera et Gog et Magog; (7) Virgo super terram Constantinopolitanam et Acristas et mare Palestinorum et Canaan et Segastaan; (8) Libra super terram Cahara et Segastaen Caherastaen et Miscemat et Timas, que est maxima ciuitas in terra Indorum, et super flumen Egypti et terram Ethiopie; (9) Scorpio super Alhagan et Emal et Tanega et Harbar Samara et Soria et Soaz et Canat et Caana et Thersoz Aendaria et Placania et Cuin et Allaaz et Aabdaeri et Arabes; (10) Sagittarius super Alumin et Serdanium et Hispaniam et Ceciliam et Arabiam antiquorum; (11) Capricornus super Indiam et Alchoz et Metharen {59^r} et Alsoz²⁰⁴ et Aaraquia et Mecarmoniam, idest Macedoniam, et Halaohaz et Ethiopes et flumen Maheraen, idest Egypti, et Scifalbehar et Amahen et Alerchenaz usque ad terram Alsin; (12) Aquarius super Assiriam Notam et Ballac et Sceaz et Bascea et Lonia et Aroquia et Assia et super terram Egipti cum sibi participantibus in terra Persie; (13) Pisces super Lactabia, que est Anglia secundum aliquos, et Ballac et Asania et Heurenia et Nicaz et Lascemoperaz et Paresalia et terram Altin et Gangaen et mare rubrum et elegit sibi Alimen, hoc est Mare Scena, et Malamonia. Item significat super terram Ethiopie et super Alexandriam et participant<es> terre Christianorum, idest non circumcisorum.

²⁰⁴ alsoz s.v. Validez a.c.

6. (1) Baldac²⁰⁵, idest Baudas, est in quarto climate cuius signum est uicesimus quartus gradus Cancri. (2) Et similiter est Iherusalem, sed eius signum est decimus nonus gradus Leonis. (3) Signum Egipti est Capricornus, Kartaginis est Gemini, Toleti Virgo, Granate Cancer, Hispalis Pisces, Balencie Scorpio, Cesarauguste Aries, Pisarum Aquarius, Luce Cancer, Persie et terre Siri Virgo cum Luna, climatis septimi Leo cum Marte terre de Meka usque ad Egiptum Scorpio cum Venere. Hec quidem igitur inuenta sunt secundum experientiam euentuum magnorum.

**< III. ALKINDI (?): LIBER DE IUDICIIS REVOLUTIONUM ANNORUM MUNDI,
TRACTATUS SECUNDUS >**

1. (1) Dixit itaque translator: Transferam ex Arabico tractatum nobilem quem collegit **Jacob filius Ysaac Alkindi** qui sapiens erat in omnibus ualde scientiis, modis et speciebus habuitque librorum copiam. (2) Et hic dixit quod de sermonibus antiquorum accepit sermones ueraces in rebus coniunctionis Saturni et Iouis. (3) Et ipse locutus est de bellis et pluuiis et de annis caristie et uniuersaliter de accidentibus mundi. (4) Et hoc est initium sui tractatus.

2. (1) Considerandum est semper ad principium anni coniunctionis in triplicitate[m], quia non est diuersitas siue sit triplicitas ignea siue terrea aut aerea aut aquea. (2) Et considera cum omni precisione ad sciendum gradum ascendentem sub equali linea, ubi medium mundi est, in hora coniunctionis luminarium uel oppositionis eorum que fiunt antequam Sol ingrediatur initium signi Arietis, quia hoc est principium reuolutionis anni mundi uel orbis. (3) Scito etiam signum reuolutionis et similiter signum ascendens cuiuslibet loci in hora coniunctionis uel oppositionis et in hora reuolutionis anni et signum ascendens in quolibet loco uel qualibet ciuitate, adhuc et locum Lune cum precisione, quia necessarium quidem est scire gradum reuolutionis anni ad sciendum qui planete sunt in angulis aut in succedentibus angulos uel in cadentibus ab angulis et quomodo se habeant ad Solem et qualiter etiam eis est ex parte dignitatum in locis suis et si sunt in signis nature sue similibus uel in contrariis, adhuc et quod est signum mundi et quis sibi preest qui aspiciat alium gradum ascendentem a loco Lune et illum qui aspicit locum fortunatum uel infortunatum secundum naturam stellarum, quando perueniet ad ipsum directio uel secundum motum planetarum ad locum stelle fortune uel infortune secundum naturam suam uel ad ipsorum radios secundum gradus equales.

²⁰⁵ Baldic V

3. (1) Dicit **Messehallah**²⁰⁶: Semper debet duci uel dirigi gradus ascendens ad sciendum esse generis illius regum²⁰⁷ et similiter Luna, domus uero decima ad sciendum esse regum. (2) Et dicit etiam quod Sol habet significationes super reges. (3) Quod si est infortunatus Sol et Iupiter, descendet infortunium super regem Alerach. (4) Et si Sol est infortunatus cum Saturno, ueniet infortunium super regem Indie. (5) Et si Sol cum Marte, ueniet infortunium super regem Alterach, id est Turcorum, et super dominum siue principem septimi climatis. (6) Et si Sol cum Venere, ueniet infortunium super Arabum regem. (7) Et si Sol cum Mercurio, ueniet infortunium super regem Romanorum, idest Christianorum. (8) Et si Sol cum {59^v} Luna, erat infortunium commune regibus et subiectis suis omnibus.

4. (1) Dixit **Albumasar**: Considerare debes quolibet anno ad signum profectionis a signo coniunctionis et gradu secundum gradus equales. (2) Et aspice si erat in principio coniunctionis aliquis aspiciens signum profectionis aut²⁰⁸ in hora reuolutionis anni mundi et da cuilibet gradui duodecim dies et dimidium et sextum unius diei. (3) Posuit autem ipse exemplum signum profectionis ab 8° gradu Libre usque ad octauum gradum Scorpionis. Et est Iupiter in duodecimo gradu Libre et Saturnus duo gradus triginta minuta signi Scorpionis. (4) Debes ergo scire quod quolibet regio siue ciuitas cuius signum est Libra fortificabitur hoc anno, si in principio coniunctionis et in reuolutione anni similiter Venus fortunata fuerit, et e contrario erit res, si fuerit infortunata; et si in coniunctione fuerit boni esse et in reuolutione mali, erit defectus aliquantulus a bono; et si in coniunctione fuerit mali esse, in reuolutione uero boni, erit defectus aliqualis a malo. (5) Et quia longitudo est quatuor graduum, eueniet bonum cuilibet loco cuius signum est Libra post quadraginta nouem dies. (6) Et proueniet profectio ad locum Saturni post decem menses, et erit significatio super infirmitates, fluxus uentris aut constipationes²⁰⁹; et significabit etiam hoc super bella, quia Saturnus est in domo Martis et eius termino.

5. (1) Dicit **Bennekha Indus**: Attendendum est semper ad fortitudinem duodenarie gradus ascendentis. In loco enim in quo perficietur numerus signorum erit fortitudo illius ad quam intrasti, in signo uidelicet in quo terminabitur numerus erit eius gradus. (2) Gradus reuolutionis anni est 18.30 signi Cancrī. Tunc ergo gradus duodenarie perueniet ad duodecimum gradum Aquarii. (3) Si igitur dispositio stellarum fortunata fuerit, eueniet bonum cuilibet loco cuius signum est Aquarius, et e contrario si mala. (4) Debes etiam attendere ad signum profectionis. Et similiter attende si remouetur aliquod boni uel mali secundum dispositionem stellarum respectu cuiuslibet loci cuius signum est signum profectionis. (5) Et scito

²⁰⁶ Messehallaz V

²⁰⁷ generis illius regum *correxī*: genus illius rerum (?) V

²⁰⁸ aut ex autem V

²⁰⁹ constipationis V

quod Saturnus significat regnum antiquum²¹⁰ uel precedens, quod scilicet fuit ante principium coniunctionis triplicitatis. Et Iupiter significat super regnum <nouum> siue presens.

6. (1) Considera quoque in coniunctione ipsorum quis superemineat alteri. (2) Nam ille qui propinquior fuerit augi sui parui circuli hic preest alii et hoc scire poteris per argumenta²¹¹ Saturni et Iouis equata. (3) Debes etiam aspicere quis eorum propinquior fuerit augi circuli ecentrici et hoc quidem scire poteris per centra equata. Qui enim propinquior fuerit augi optinebit. (4) Debes quoque considerare ipsorum latitudines. Nam ille cuius latitudo sinistra fuerit uincet illum qui in linea signorum fuerit. Et ille qui in linea signorum fuerit uincet illum qui est uersus meridiem. Et si ambo sinistri sunt, uincit ille cuius latitudo sinistra maior fuerit. Et si ambo meridionales, uincet ille cuius latitudo est minor. Et si ambo in linea signorum, uincet Saturnus quia superior est.

7. (1) Rursum attendere debes ad fortitudines ipsorum secundum dignitates suas in loco coniunctionis, ut est dignitas domus, exaltationis, triplicitatis, termini et faciei, quis etiam ipsorum presit in reuolutione anni super signum ascendens in quolibet loco et super locum Solis et locum Lune et locum luminarium coniunctionis uel oppositionis eorum que precessit introitum Solis in Arietem, adhuc et locum partis fortune.

8. (1) Item dicit **Messehallah**: Considerare debes in qualibet reuolutione planetam orientalem a Sole, quia hic est particeps dominationis super annum. (2) Quod si fuerit in aliquo angulorum gradus aspectu aspicientis in quolibet loco, tunc erit fortitudo maior. (3) Quod si fuerit occidentalis a Luna, tunc erit fortitudo eius magna ualde.

9. (1) Debes etiam semper aspicere quis presit super quinque loca dignitatum in hora coniunctionis uel oppositionis luminarium precedentis introitum Solis in Arietem. (2) Si dederit ille fortitudinem suam planete superiori, iudicare debes secundum naturam stelle fortitudinem recipientis. (3) Debesque commiscere naturam dignitatum cum natura {60^r} planete secundum domum et signum in quo est receptor fortitudinis. (4) Et si planeta recipiens fortitudinem fuerit retrogradus, reddet illam fortitudinem illi planete qui eam dederit. (5) Et consimiliter est si fuerit sub radiis Solis ad 15 gradus.

10. (1) Dixerunt quoque sapientes Indorum quod inspiciendum est semper ad uiginti octo mansiones Lune in qualibet anni reuolutione, hora coniunctionis uel oppositionis luminarium precedente Solis introitum in punctum in quo dies equatur nocti; et eodem modo faciendum est in mense quolibet. (2) Debesque

²¹⁰ antiquum s.v. V antiquorum a.c.

²¹¹ augmenta V argumenta s.v. V²

semper pro radice ponere coniunctionem <uel> oppositionem luminarium precedentem initium reuolutionis anni in quo coinunguntur superiores; nam quidquid per hoc significatur est generale siue commune. (3) Et reuolutio anni in quo accidit coniunctio de uiginti annis significat super particularia, reuolutiones quoque annorum singularium super particularia particularium. (4) Amplius et reuolutiones mensium significant super particularia particularium ipsorum singularium.

11. (1) Dixerunt etiam considerandum esse quis presit reuolutioni anni. Nam hic est dominus signi profectionis aut dominus termini directionis a loco coniunctionis magne aut dominus reuolutionis anni uel per aspectum uel per directionem. (2) Si inquam Saturnus dominus fuerit aut Venus aut Mercurius uel Luna, erit annus pluuiosus cum multitudine pluuiæ, et multo fortius si fuerit dominus ille in signo aqueo uel in signo super aquam significante, ut est Aquarius et finis Capricorni – nam ibi est effusor aque prior et posterior –, uel signum Leonis ubi est figura nauis. (3) Quod si scire uolueris utrum in principio anni erit pluuia aut in fine, respice locum Veneris in hora introitus Solis in signum Libre. (4) Si inquam sub radiis [suis] Solis fuerit et occidentalis, augmentabitur pluuia in prima medietate anni et in secunda medietate minuetur. (5) Si autem uisa fuerit Venus et orientalis, erit pluuia modica in prima medietate anni et e contrario in secunda.

12. (1) Semper autem est attendendum ad clauas Lune duodecim. (2) Prima est hora coniunctionis Solis et Lune, secunda est cum distat a Sole 12 gradus, tertia 45, quarta 90, quinta 135, sexta 168, septima 180, octaua 192, nona 225, decima 270, undecima 315, et duodecima 348.

13. (1) Mansiones quoque Lune significantes humiditatem sex sunt et sunt iste: 4 Aldebaran, 12 Alsarpha, 16 Alsabenen, 17 Alkalil, 22 Esezaldabach, 27 Alpreaguealkaar. (2) Et mansiones sicce sunt sex et sunt iste: 2 Albatin, 6 Alhanae, 9 Alteraf, 18 Alkelaue 25. Sceazalkabia, 26. Alperagueallaol. (3) Alie uero mansiones sunt temperate siue mediocres. (4) Et tu poteris etiam habere notitiam mansionum hoc modo. Considera in qua mansione uideatur Luna in quolibet mense et minuatur semper hoc tempore a loco Solis et Lune et similiter a locis aliorum planetarum nouem gradus equales ad sciendum dispositionem²¹² siue figuram celi stellati, et debes incipere numerum ab Alnethai idest Alsaris et sunt cornua Arietis.

14. (1) Omnium quoque antiquorum et posteriorum concors est sententia quod quilibet planeta coniungitur alii planete aut aspicit ipsum quocumque aspectu fuerit quamdiu ad aspectum eius uadit. (2) Sed in hoc loco dissentiunt sapientes astrorum, quia aliqui dicunt quod hoc erit cum inter eos fuerit minus sex gradibus. (3) Alii autem dixerunt hoc esse secundum quantitatem graduum splendoris

²¹² dispositionem: disposicion of the Mone L

stellarum. (4) Nam splendor Saturni et Iouis est nouem gradus et Martis per se octo, Veneris et Mercurii septem. (5) Alii quoque dixerunt quod aspectus est perfectus si sextilis fuerit ut sit sexaginta graduum ante uel retro et peruenerit ad hunc numerum. (6) Et planeta inferior qui dat suam fortitudinem planete superiori, adhuc est in termino in quo fuit in principio uel prius. {60^v} (7) Nam contingere potest quod aspectus sit perfectus et uadat superior ad alium superiorem sibi propinquum si directus fuerit. (8) Et si sit retrogradus, eueniet aliquando quod radius uel aspectus sit perfectus in termino in quo non erat prius. (9) Et hoc contingit etiam in stellis cum superior sit uelox in cursu suo et inferior tardus. (10) Porro ueritas huius est quod aspectus minorari debet cum incipit inferior esse sub²¹³ splendore superioris in coniunctione non in aspectu. (11) Et non numera lucem siue splendorem cum principio splendoris sed corpus cum corpore, numerum cum numero splendoris siue lucis stelle superioris, et quando peruenerit ad splendorem ueraciter secundum numerum sexaginta graduum, erit in aspectu sextili ante uel retro; et secundum numerum nonaginta graduum in quarto aspectu et secundum numerum centum uiginti graduum in trino; et secundum numerum centum octaginta in aspectu opposito. (12) Et erit tunc fortitudo aspectus in uigore maximo; nam tunc exhibit ad opus.

15. (1) **Messehallah** dicit: si fuerit receptor fortitudinis in signo mobili, dabit ipse quasi numerum dierum. (2) Et hoc idem generale est quod signa mobilia festinationem significant, fixa uero permanentiam, [et] communia uero mediocritatem. (3) Radix scilicet pluuiæ omnium supradictorum est quod domus luminarium opposite sunt domibus Saturni. (4) Cum ergo in hora coniunctionis uel oppositionis eorum fuerint cum Saturno uel in eius aspectibus, significabunt obscuritatem aeris et pluuiam magnam. (5) Et commisceas dispositionem mansionum²¹⁴ Lune cum predictis. (6) Iupiter quoque cum Mercurio uentos significat, Venere etiam in coniunctione cum Marte exeunte uel in eius radio²¹⁵ siue splendore. (7) Considera si Mars occidentalis fuerit aut in signis aqueis, quia hoc pluuiam significat et coruscationes magnas et tonitrua. (8) Aspice similiter Lunam in hora coniunctionis. Si ipsa inquam Luna tunc aut in quarta sequente aut in oppositione coniuncta fuerit planete uel in eius aspectu preter illum qui est Solis, significabit hoc serenitatem aeris usque ad proximam quartam sequentem. (9) Debes etiam aspicere angulos in quolibet loco. Nam si pluuiæ significator in aliquo angulorum illius loci fuerit, ibidem fortitudo pluuiæ manifestabitur. (10) At si in domibus intermediis fuerit, inter ipsas inquam et ascendens, in aspectus ligatione,²¹⁶ erit etiam pluuiæ modica, et si in cadentibus, non erit.

²¹³ sub ex in corr. V

²¹⁴ mansionum *mg. add. V*

²¹⁵ radio: in al' aspectu *mg. not. V*

²¹⁶ legatione V ligation, id est in byndinge L

16. (1) Sapientes quoque Persarum dixerunt: Cum Venus, Luna et Mercurius in mansionibus Lune humidis fuerint, significat hoc pluuiam magnam; cum reuolutio anni, significauerit annum pluuiosum in die coniunctionis eorum, aut cum peruenerit ad aspectum in²¹⁷ uno gradu [aspectum], tunc erit pluuiia et magis erit si Luna fuerit in aliqua suarum clauium duodecim secundum quod prius explanauit.

17. (1) Rememorabor autem nunc sermonis **Ptolomei** sapientis qui dixit quod semper manifestabitur fortitudo planete secundum naturam eius cum fuerit in linea orbis signorum et fuerit directus. (2) Si autem septemtrionalis fuerit, erit fortitudo eius magna, et si meridionalis, minuetur eius fortitudo. (3) Quod si in auge fuerit, non manifestabit suam fortitudinem nisi modicum (4) Et si in opposito augis fuerit, tunc fortitudinem suam manifestabit multum. Sapientes uero Indorum contrarium dixerunt. (5) Ego autem dico quod utrorumque sermo uerus est, nam omnis res corporea, ut est pluuiia et frigus et calor, se habet in esse suo iuxta sermonem **Ptolomei**, sed in rebus anime, ut est exaltatio et fortitudo, uictoria et dignitas erit iuxta sermonem sapientum Indorum.

18. (1) Nunc quoque dabo tibi communem regulam et generalem ad sciendum esse frigoris et caloris, humiditatis et siccitatis. (2) Considerabis enim semper ad Saturnum et Iouem, secundum quod se habuerint circuli superioris in figuris. Nam Saturnus significare habet super tempus in sua totalitate, Iupiter autem super annum. (3) Considerabis inquam horam introitus Solis in capita signorum mobilium et aspice si fuerint duo superiores in signis {61¹} calidis, quia tunc erit quarta illa anni calida, et si in frigidis, erit frigida, et si in humidis humida, et si in dissimilibus locis fuerint, ut unus sit in calido signo et alter in frigido, erit quarta illa temperata; eodem etiam modo se habet in humiditate et siccitate. (4) Hoc autem quod iam dixi unum est testimonium. (5) Secundum uero testimonium est cum fuerit dominus anni superioribus commixtus, tunc enim iudicabis per duo testimonia. (6) Et si loca ipsorum et esse diuersa fuerint, scito quis eorum plus fortitudinis habeat. (7) Nam orientalis si fuerit de superioribus, maioris est fortitudinis quam occidentalis; e contrario uero se habet res in planetis inferioribus. (8) Scientia quidem domini anni est scire planetam qui fortitudinem habuerit maiorem super quinque loca dignitatum in principio reuolutionis anni.

19. (1) Dixit etiam **Messehallah** quod semper commiscendus est dominus anni cum planeta qui fuerit in aliquo angulorum signi ascendentis anni²¹⁸ in principio, similique modo faciendum est in mense quolibet²¹⁹ et in prima quarta et medio mensis necnon et in quarta secunda. (2) Adhuc autem considerandi sunt dies clauium Lune.

²¹⁷ prius per sed exp. V

²¹⁸ anni ad principio refert, cf. in the bygynnyng of the yere L

²¹⁹ mensis cuiuslibet (sc. in principio mensis cuiuslibet) in every month L

20. (1) Amplius dixit **Albumasar**: Magna clauis pluuię est cum coniungitur Saturnus cum Sole in hora coniunctionis uel oppositionis aut fuerit in eius aspectu quocumque in hora clauium Lune, quia tunc significabit pluuiam magnam multis diebus durantem. (2) Clauis uero parua est coniunctio alicuius planete corporalis aut per aspectum cum planeta qui fuerit dominus domus sui detrimenti seu exitii, ut si iungatur Mercurius cum Ioue, nam hoc significat humiditates cum uento forti; et consimiliter Venus cum Marte super humiditate cum coruscatione et tonitrua, Luna etiam cum Saturno significat forte gelu et niuem in hyeme. (3) Dixit quoque rursus **Albumasar** se expertum esse multis annis quod cum coniunguntur tres planete in signo aquatico²²⁰ significat humiditates.

21. (1) Iterum dixit **Benneka Indus**: Si fuerit signum coniunctionis uel oppositionis aliquod signorum aqueorum, hoc significat pluuiam, et eo magis si aspiciat dominus anni locum coniunctionis²²¹, et similiter est in oppositione. (2) Quod si dominus anni fuerit in opposito coniunctionis signi, tunc erit significatio fortior. (3) Et si locus coniunctionis seu oppositionis fuerit in aliquo angulorum signi ascendentis, tunc erit res magis fortis. (4) Et erit pluuią quando perueniet [in] Luna motu suo diuerso ad gradum signi ascendentis, et hoc est expertum. (5) Retrogradatio uero planete, cum est sinistra, significat humiditates et eo magis si euenerit in aliquo signorum aqueorum et fuerit Luna in hora coniunctionis uel oppositionis dans fortitudinem domino domus coniunctionis uel oppositionis²²² aut illi qui dignitatem habuerit in loco dicto. (6) Hoc enim significat pluuiam et erit tempus euentus eius secundum numerum graduum qui fuerint inter Lunam et radium²²³ planete per coniunctionem aut per aspectum, hoc est secundum complementum numeri. (7) Nam si fuerit inter eos tres gradus, erit pluuią post tres dies, ab hora uero retrogradationis planete usque quo sit in oppositione Solis. (8) Si quidem de superioribus sit, significatur humiditas iuxta hoc quod significare habet ab hora oppositionis sue cum Sole usque ad stationem eius secundam. (9) Simile est in inferioribus planetis suo modo, unde hoc est eis commune a principio stationis prime usque ad oppositionem Solis aut usque ad oppositum augis epicicli. Et non est similiter ab illo loco usque ad stationem secundam. (10) Vniuersaliter autem significatur magis pluuią tempore quo separatur Luna a coniunctione uel oppositione Solis et dederit fortitudinem planete retrogrado, quam significetur si fortitudinem dederit directo. (11) Et si planeta fuerit in statione secunda, significat mundiciem aeris siue serenitatem usque ad quartam quando erit prope oppositum loci sui.

²²⁰ aquatico: in alio Aquarii *mg.* V

²²¹ coniunctionis: or els opposicioun *add.* L

²²² oppositionis: there beynge retrograde *add.* L

²²³ radium: the <de>grees (gradum ?) L

22. (1) Dixit quoque **Sahal Iudeus**: Attendere debes quolibet die ad partem aeris quam {61^v} ita scies. (2) Mensurare quidem debes quolibet die longitudinem que fuerit inter locum Solis et Saturni²²⁴ et proicere hunc numerum a loco Lune mane in ortu Solis, et aspice si cadat hec pars in aliqua domorum Saturni, nam hoc significat obscuritatem aeris, si Saturnus ipsam aspiciat et fuerit in aliqua mansionum Lune significantium pluuiam. (3) Quod si ceciderit Luna in aliqua domorum Iouis uel Mercurii, hoc significat uentos et eo melius si fuerit dominus partis in aliquo signorum uentos significantium. (4) Et si fuerit in domibus Veneris, significat humiditatem et eo melius si fuerit in aliqua mansionum Lune pluuiam significantium. (5) Et si in domibus Martis, significat mundiciem aeris et claritatem nisi fuerit ipsa pars in Scorpione et Mars in signo aqueo, quia tunc non erit aer serenus competenter. (6) Et si in domo Solis, erit aer serenus, et si in domo Lune, tunc significatur humiditas. (7) Et hoc totum uerum est si dominus partis ipsam partem aspiciat.

23. (1) Sermonem quidem generalem ponit **Messehallah** dicens: Considera in reuolutione anni et aspice coniunctionem uel oppositionem que fuerit in principio eius. (2) Si sit Luna coniuncta infortune et similiter gradus coniunctionis uel oppositionis siue sit hoc per coniunctionem siue per aspectum et sunt in angulis signi ascendentis, significat hoc annum malum per infirmitates et mortalitatem secundum naturam infortune. (3) Nam Mars significat calorem et bella et eo magis si fuerit in signo figure humane. Luna uero significat super quemlibet hominem in communi. (4) Et si Luna fuerit cum Saturno, hoc significat infirmitates graues et diuturnas maxime si fuerit Saturnus in signo terreo. (5) Quod si Luna fuerit in reuolutione anni in loco cadenti et dederit fortitudinem Ioui aut Veneri et hii non sint in domibus cadentibus, hoc significat quod plures hominum exhibunt de angustia ad libertatem, et e contrario si Luna fuerit in loco bono et dederit fortitudinem planete cadenti et eo magis si planeta illa fuerit infortuna. (6) Et scito quod locus Martis significat loca bellorum.

24. (1) Dixit **Albumasar**: Semper attendere debes ad signum profectionis in principio magne coniunctionis in triplicitate et similiter in principio coniunctionis superiorum in uiginti annis. (2) Et ducas uel dirigas locum coniunctionis prime per gradus equales et similiter per gradus ascensionum loci cuiuslibet. (3) Et in anno quo peruenerit ad locum Martis precise uel ad gradum loci sui primi aut ad coniunctionem eius, tunc significantur bella. (4) Et simili modo faciendum est in iudicio nature cuiuslibet planete. (5) Quolibet uero anno in quo Saturnus est in aspectu quarto cum Ioue et fuerint ipsi in angulis coniunctionis prime, significatur commixtio regum et si sit ibi Mars, considera quando renouabuntur bella.

²²⁴ et Saturni s.l. add. V² and that of Saturn add. L

25. (1) At scito etiam inter antiquos esse discordiam de signis igneis. (2) Nam omnes dicunt signa coniunctionum esse super partem Orientis. **Ptolomeus** uero dicit significationem ipsorum esse super partem Septemtrionis. (3) Omnes autem antiqui et similiter **Ptolomeus** concordati sunt signa aerea significare super Occidentem. (4) Et omnes antiqui dicunt quod signa²²⁵ terrea sunt meridionalia et signa aquea septemtrionalia. (5) **Ptolomeus** uero consentit quod signa terrea sunt meridionalia, sed ipse dicit ignea esse septemtrionalia.

26. (1) **Albumasar** quoque dicit se expertum esse multis uicibus, cum significat annus bella, quod hoc est quando intrat Mars sub combustione Solis et sunt 6 gradus aut Iupiter si dignitatem habuerit in signo ascendente hora coniunctionis uel oppositionis que precessit reuolutionem. (2) In quolibet autem anno in quo redierit planeta ad locum eius in principio anni coniunctionis magne, tunc est ligatus cum eius radio et secundum eius fortitudinem renouabitur in illo anno res que est secundum naturam illius planete. (3) Quod si fuerit planeta bonus et sit dominus domus sexte uel 8° aut 12° secundum ascendens hore coniunctionis uel oppositionis precedentis reuolutionem anni, minuetur de bonitate eius. (4) Et si sit infortuna, augmentabitur dolor super dolorem. (5) Et si sit fortuna in aliquo angulorum ciuitatis cuiuslibet, tunc erit melius, et si sit infortuna, tunc erit peius. (6) Et signum cuiuslibet ciuitatis si non fuerit tibi cognitum considera ad magna infortunia que illi ciuitati superuenerunt. (7) Et poteris scire constellationem eius in hora edificationis ciuitatis secundum uiam rationis.

[colophon] Explicit liber de iudiciis reuolutionum annorum mundi quem compilauit Iacob filius Ysaac Alkindi. Expletus est libellus iste ascendente Cancro, in quo Luna coniuncta Ioui, die tertia Septembris anno domini 1278° in Mechlinia, translatus ex Hebrayco in Latinum per Henricum Bate ad preces Iohannis de Milana.'

²²⁵ signa correxi: sunt V

II.3. *English Translation of the Latin Text*
(Shlomo Sela with the Assistance of all the Other Authors)

< I. ABRAHAM AVENEZRA: ON THE REVOLUTIONS OF THE YEARS OF THE WORLD >

< 1. On the supercelestial bodies >

1. (1) There is no disagreement among the scholars that all the generated things are connected to the supercelestial bodies, whose power universally flows into all the inferior things. (2) For the souls of all living beings are like forms coming from the movers of the orbs and from the light of the fixed and wandering stars. (3) The power is seen to be greater insofar as the planets are larger and closer to the Earth. (4) Therefore Ptolemy says that if the planet is in the inferior part of the eccentric orb or in the perigee, its [the planet's] power is more manifest on Earth than when it is close to its apogee, and therefore the southern part of the Earth is not habitable, because of the strength of the Sun's heat, because it is the largest among the visible stars. (5) The outstanding scholars too agree that the human soul is connected to the orb of the signs, where the fixed stars are. (6) This is the eighth orb from Earth. All its stars are divided into 48 constellations, of which 21 are northern from orb of the signs [the zodiac], 15 are southern, and 12 are in the great orb, which is the girdle of the orb of the signs. (7) They named each of the 12 parts or divisions <of the great orb> according to the name of the constellation that is close to it in this orb. (8) The Moon and the other five planets sometimes are in the middle line of the orb of the signs and sometimes they go out of it a few degrees to the north or the south [lit., to the right or to the left]. (9) The Sun, though, is always in the middle line of the orb of the signs [i.e., the ecliptic].

< 2. On the nature of the planets >

1. (1) Before a statement about the conjunctions of the planets is made, let us speak about their natures. (2) It is well known that the scholars have shown by reasons that the nature of the stars is not fiery because the heavens, and anything in them, are not composite, but simple [i.e., consist of one element]; hence it always remains as it is and does not increase or decrease, and these sublime creatures do not change in any way. (3) Hence, the Psalmist said about them: « He hath also established them for ever and ever ». [Ps. 148:6]

2. (1) But here a difficult question has been asked, namely, why the scholars of the judgments of the stars said that the Moon is cold, and Mars, which is wholly fiery, is hot. (2) Some even say: we have tested these things and found that this star [Mars] generates heat and that one [the Moon] <generates> cold. (3) But Ptolemy says that the Moon is cold and humid because it is close to the Earth, from which comes a great humidity to it [the Moon]. (4) He also said that the Sun is of a hot

nature, and since <the nature> of heat is to ascend, therefore Mars is hot; Saturn, indeed, is cold since it is far away from the other planets; Jupiter is temperate since it is intermediate between heat and cold.

3. (1) Jacob al-Kindī said that four signs are the beginning of the revolutions of the tropics [i.e., mobile signs], and since heat is active, therefore it is said that Aries is hot. (2) Heat and cold are active, and when the Sun is straight in Aries, it is rising with respect to our inhabited part <of the Earth> and then plants are germinated and diseases are caused. (3) They said that Cancer is cold <and that> cold is similarly active.

4. (1) Therefore other said that the judgments of the stars are derived from proportions. (2) For the proportion of the orb of Jupiter to the orb of the Sun, and to the orb of the Moon, and to the Earth, is a friendly proportion. (3) The opposite applies to the proportion of Saturn and Mars. (4) <The number of> the Moon is like 12, of Venus and Mercury is like 14; of the Sun is 18 and of Mars is 20, of Jupiter is 24 and of Saturn is 32.

5. (1) The truth is that any light is generative of heat, and since the body of the Moon is smaller than the body of the Earth, and <the body> of the Sun is 166 times larger than that of the Earth, therefore the Sun generates a great heat. (2) Since the nature of the small heat, which is loose, is mitigating and allowing fluidity, hence this light, by its heat, which is small, increases humidity but not so the Sun. (3) Venus is close to the Moon's nature because its light is great, and it is also close to the Earth, therefore both signify rains. (4) Mercury, since it is small, is similarly changed, for its light is small. (5) Jupiter, since it is the largest of all the planets after the Sun, and is far away from the Earth, it is therefore generative of moderate heat and humidity, which is of the nature of life. (6) Since the Sun is parching, because of its intense heat, and Mars is large and its orb is close <to the Sun>, it generates a great heat. (7) They said that this is its nature and the reason for its action and effect. (8) Saturn, since it is far away from the Earth, its light is therefore not generative of heat according to the mixture that is appropriate to man, although the light in itself is generative of heat. (9) An example of this is that the scholars of medicine say that bovine flesh is cold; they are right, when <bovine flesh is> compared to the human body, and yet it is hot inasmuch as it is flesh.

6. (1) Because they found the nature of the signs through a comparison with things on Earth, they said that Aries is hot and moderately dry, and likewise for the fifth and ninth <sign> from it, Taurus is cold and dry, Gemini, according to its human shape, is hot and humid, Cancer is cold and humid, like the nature of water. (2) There is no need to prolong this discussion, because the truth of the ratios is in the aspects, and there is no disagreement on this. For Aries, Leo and Sagittarius are hot and dry; Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn <are> cold and dry; Gemini, Aquarius and

Libra are hot and humid; Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces are cold and humid. (3) Moreover, they all agreed that the Moon is close to the Earth, and that it signifies the nature of the native according to the condition of its location and according to how others aspect it [the Moon]. (4) Mercury signifies the discernment of reason and the human soul; Venus, because it is located high, <signifies> the desire to continue the species; the Sun is like the heart in the human body, for with the heart the soul increases the heat; therefore the heart is related to the Sun; the upper planets signify universal matters; Saturn <signifies> an ancient people and an ancient kingdom; Jupiter <signifies> a new people and a new kingdom; Mars is a significator of wars and victories; it seems that it does not happen that kingdoms change unless by wars.

< 3. On conjunctions >

1. (1) When we examined all the conjunctions of all planets, we found that they are 120, because there are 21 <conjunctions> of two <planets>, and similarly of 5 <planets>, and <there are> 35 <conjunctions> of three <planets>, and similarly of 4 <planets>, <there are> 7 <conjunctions> of 6 <planets>, and all of them derive from seven, they multiply odd numbers by duplication and there is no number except 7 and septennial. There is one conjunction of the seven <planets>.

2. (1) The root of the significations of general matters is according to the two upper planets, and the beginning of their conjunction is in Aries. (2) After 20 years they conjoin Sagittarius, and after other 20 years in Leo, <...> and they proceed in the same way for 12 or 13 times. (3) This occurs in 240 or 260 years. (4) After the fiery signs they shift to earthy signs <and conjoin> in the same way as they did in the fiery signs. (5) Afterwards they shift to the airy signs, and subsequently <they shift> to the watery signs. (6) The conjunction in the triplicity is called the great conjunction. (7) The conjunction of 20 years is the small conjunction.

3. (1) It is not possible for a man to find the minute of the conjunction of the planets because of the slowness of their motion. (2) The locations of the planets are found by observational instruments, by which seconds cannot be marked on [i.e., marked on the instruments]. (3) Consequently, the scholars of the judgments of astrology relied on the revolution of the world-year and on the ascendant in the place of the equal line or the middle of the world, moreover, on the ascendant of the place under consideration according to its longitude and latitude, as it is written in the Book of Tables. (4) Moreover, Ptolemy says that the judgment of a year depends on the moment of the conjunction of the luminaries or their opposition that takes place before the revolution of that year, and this should be associated in any year to the conjunction or opposition of the luminaries immediately preceding the entrance of the Sun into the mobile signs. (5) It is also necessary to know with earnest attention the degree of the ascendant in any place at the moment of the

conjunction of the luminaries or their opposition in the month in which the two upper <planets> will conjoin, and this is the truth.

4. (1) Know that the sign of the Jews is Aquarius, Leo <is the sign> of the Christians, Scorpio of the Muslims. (2) Those who rely on experience also said that the constellation of the Muslims is Venus with Scorpio, because the conjunction of the sect of the Muslims took place in the term of Venus. (3) Many of the scholars also observe the conjunction of Saturn and Mars that takes place every 30 years in Cancer.

< 4. On the judgments of the world-years >

1. (1) We shall now discuss the judgments of the world-years. (2) First we enjoin you not to rely on the cycles of 2000 years according to the degrees of the zodiac, and not on the <cycles of> 2000 <years> according to the reckoning of the signs, and not on the <cycles of> 2000 <years> according to the reckoning of the planets. (3) For all this is nothing else than a destruction of thought and it is not beneficial to anyone to read books on cycles of 10, 100, and 2000 years. (4) You must know that the judgments of the world are a matter related to rains, and to the year of famine, of diseases, of wars and also of the changing of kingdoms.

< 5. On the lunar mansions >

1 (1) It is proper to remember the significations of the lunar mansions on rains, also the significations of the mansions on dryness. (2) I will present their shapes and names in Arabic.

2. (1) The first mansion is *al-naṭḥ*, that is, the ram's horns, consists of three third-magnitude stars, arranged in this way ∴ (2) The second mansion is *al-buṭayn*, that is, the ram's small belly, consists of three small 4th-magnitude stars ∴ (3) The third <mansion is> *al-thurayyā*, which are the Pleiades, and it is the ram's tail, consists of six 4th-magnitude stars ∴ (4) The fourth <mansion is> *al-dabarān*, a bright red star of the first magnitude ∴, and it is the eye of the bull. (5) The fifth <mansion is> *al-haq'a*, the head of the twins, consists of three small second-magnitude stars between two bright <stars> ✧ of the second magnitude. (6) The sixth <mansion is> *al-han'a*, close to the twins, consists of three third-magnitude stars with the similitude of an arrow ∴ (7) The seventh <mansion is> *al-dhirā'*, that is, the arm, consists of two bright stars close to the head of the twins : (8) The eighth <mansion is> *al-nathra*, that is, the lion's nose, consists of two small stars in the similitude of a cloud, of the fourth magnitude ✧ (9) The ninth <mansion is> *al-ṭarf*, that is, the eye, and it is the eye of the lion, consists of 3 small stars ∴, the third is below and hidden, of the fifth magnitude. (10) The tenth <mansion is> *al-jabha*, that is, the forehead of the lion, consists of 4 stars of the third and fourth magnitude ∴ (11) The 11th <mansion is> *al-zubra*, and others name it *al-kharātān*, and it is the side of

the lion, consists of two stars, a small and a large one, of the second and fifth magnitudes : (12) The 12th <mansion is> *al-ṣarfa*, that is the tail of the lion, consists of one large star of the first magnitude. (13) The 13th <mansion is> *al-‘awwā*, consists of four sixth-magnitude stars, and above there is a small bright star ... (14) The 14th <mansion is> *alchemaah*, which is *al-simāk al-a‘zal*, that is the unarmed, and the reason is that it does not have spears, consists of one bright star of the first magnitude . (15) The 15th <mansion is> *al-ghafr*, <consists of> three small fourth-magnitude stars .:, and it is the tongue of the scale. (16) The 16th <mansion is> *al-zubānā*, which are the pans of the scale, consists of two second-magnitude stars .. (17) The 17th <mansion is> *al-iklīl*, that is, the crown of the scorpion’s head, consists of three third-magnitude stars ... (18) The 18th <mansion is> *al-qalb*, that is, the heart of the scorpion <consists of> a great star of the second magnitude between two small shining stars . . . (19) The 19th <mansion is> *al-ṣawla*, that is, the sting of the scorpion, it consists of two stars of the fourth magnitude grouped with other small stars. (20) The 20th <mansion is> *al-na‘ā‘im*, it consists of 8 stars, four grouped on one side and four grouped on the other side; above there is a bright star; they are of the third and fourth magnitudes : (21) The 21th <mansion is> *al-balda*, it is in the likeness of the letter that the Hebrews call *het* but reversed, it consists of 6 stars in the form of an arch .. (22) The 22nd <mansion is> *sa‘d al-dhābiḥ*, and this is difficult to write in Hebrew, and it means the luck of the butcher or slaughterer, consists of three stars, a small one between the other two : (23) The 23rd <mansion is> *sa‘d al-bula‘*, consists of two stars, one as if swallowed up by the other, and the two are small : (24) The 24th <mansion is> *sa‘d al-su‘ūd*, consists of two stars, that is one large <and one small> and close to them one small .: (25) The 25th <mansion is> *sa‘d al-akhbiya*, consists of four stars, two of them standing like a wave on the <other> two, which do not emit as much light as the other two :: (26) The 26th <mansion is> *al-fargh al-awwal*, that is the urn of the water-carrier, consists of two stars of the fourth magnitude : (27) The 27th <mansion is> *al-fargh al-thāni*, that is the posterior urn, consists of two stars <located> south of the urn of the water-carrier : (28) The 28th <mansion is> *baṭn al-ḥūt*, that is the belly of the fish, consists of seven stars arranged in the similitude of the body of a fish, and they are close to the orb of the signs [i.e. the ecliptic].

3. (1) I shall therefore compile a table to know the mansions and how many degrees, minutes and seconds each of them contains. (2) This table has been corrected, and its division is according to the eighth orb.

**Corrected table of the lunar mansions according to the agreement
of the philosophers**

1. Aries, <i>al-naṭḥ</i> that is the horns,	12.51.26, temperate
2. Aries, <i>al-buṭayn</i> ,	25.42.51, dry
3. Taurus, <i>al-thurayyā</i> , that is, the Pleiades,	8.34.17, temperate
4 Taurus, <i>al-dabarān</i> , that is, the Hyades,	4.21.26.43, humid
5 Gemini, <i>al-haq'a</i> , that is, falling,	4.17.9, temperate
6 Gemini, <i>al-han'a</i> ,	17.8.34, dry
7 Gemini, <i>al-dhirā'</i> ,	7.30.0.0, temperate (†humid)
8 Cancer, <i>al-nathra</i> , that is, the fugitive,	12.51.26, temperata
9 Cancer, <i>al-ṭarf</i> , that is, unimpeded dry,	25.42.51, dry
10 Leo, <i>al-jabha</i> , that is, forehead,	10.8.34.17, temperate (†humid)
11 Leo, <i>al-zubra</i> that is, flourishing,	21.25.43, temperate
12 Virgo, <i>al-ṣarfa</i> , that is, hairs,	12.4.17.9, humid
13 Virgo, <i>al-'awwā'</i> , that is, weasel,	17.8.34, dry
14 Virgo, <i>al-simāk</i> , that is, spike,	30.0.0, temperate
15 Libra, <i>al-ghafr</i> , that is, bitter,	15.12.51.36, temperate (†humid)
16 Libra, <i>al-zubānā</i> , that is, conjoined humid,	16.25.42.51, humid
17 Scorpio <i>al-iklīl</i> , that is, crown,	8.34.17, humid
18 Scorpio, <i>al-qalb</i> , that is, unimpeded dry,	21.25.43, dry
19 Sagitarius, <i>al-ṣawla</i> , that is, destroyed,	19.4.17.9, temperate, (†humid)
20 Sagitarius, <i>al-na'ā'im</i> , that is, delight,	17.8.34, temperate (†humid according to <John> of Seville and the seasons of the Indians)
21 Sagitarius, <i>al-balda</i> , that is, boundary,	30.0.0, temperate
22 Capricorn, <i>sa'd al-dhābiḥ</i> , that is, serpent,	20.12.51.26, humid
23 Capricorn, <i>sa'd al-bula'</i> , that is, swallower,	25.42.51, temperate
24 Aquarius, <i>sa'd al-su'ūd</i> , that is, bright serpent,	8.34.17, temperate
25 Aquarius, <i>sa'd al-akhbiya</i> , that is, dry serpent,	21.25.43, dry

26 Pisces, <i>al-fargh al-awwal</i> , that is, dry blow,	4.17.9, dry
27 Pisces, <i>al-fargh al-thāni</i> , that is, stock of a bean,	17.8.34, humid
28 Pisces, <i>baṭn al-ḥūt</i> , that is, fishes,	30.0.0, temperate

4. Note that there are six mansions that are principally humid, according to the evidence provided by Al-Kindī, and Ibn Ezra enumerates only those as humid, and they have been indicated here.

< 6. On the solar year >

1. (1) But now we wish to speak about the disagreement between the tables of the Ancients and those who came after. (2) Regarding this, the Ancients agree that the solar year contains truly 365 days and a quarter of a day and also $1/120$ of a day, from which it follows that the <rotational> excess above 365 whole days is approximately 93° . (3) Yet the scholars of Persia say that in this excess 15 minutes of a degree are added to these 93° . (4) Ptolemy says that from this additional quarter of a day there is a deficit of $1/300$ of a day, which amounts to one degree and 12 minutes. (5) After Ptolemy emerged many scholars at different times who examined and proved that the solar year is $1/120$ of a day shorter than this additional quarter. (6) And it is in fact astonishing how such a great error can emerge. For in 60 years a difference of one day will occur between those who posit the greatest value of the year and the others who make it smallest. (7) And this is something anyone can test through the shadow and also through observational instruments.

2. (1) Other scholars said that there are two small circles at the heads of Aries and Libra, and according to this view they said that there is sometimes an ascent and sometimes a descent. (2) And some within this group disagree with the others. (3) Some say that this motion goes as far as 8° . (4) Others, making finer distinctions, say it goes up to $10 \frac{2}{3}^\circ$. (5) The Indian scholars say that this is the motion of the fixed stars, but this is not so. (6) For it appears clearly that Ptolemy found in his time through observational instruments that the Sun enters the head of Aries, when day equals night in all the climates, eight days after this happened according to the reckoning of the Indians. (7) Therefore he said in the Book of Figures that it is necessary to add 8° to know the figure of the revolution of the orb of the signs. (8) But nowadays it is the other way round, because the Sun enters the head of Aries and days equals night nine days before this happens according to the reckoning of the Indians. (9) Hence there were 8° in the year of the conjunction of the two upper <planets> in Virgo.

3. (1) I shall now reveal part of this secret. (2) Know that there are two groups among them. (3) Some of them acknowledge the beginning of the year at the equinoctial point, whether the motion of ascent or descent be true or not. (4)

Others, by contrast, take the Sun's return to the position of a fixed star, whether the orb of fixed stars moves by one degree in 100 years, or in 66 years and 8 months, or in 70 years, or the starry orb has no other motion except that of ascent and descent. (5) The number or quantity of the Sun's motion from one point to the same point is the same except that there is a motion to the orb of the Sun, whose center is removed from the center of the Earth, because the motion of its apogee is equal to the motion of the fixed stars. (6) I shall give an examples thereof. (7) Ptolemy says that the motion of the fixed stars in one year is $1/100$ of a degree, which amounts to 36 seconds and to which correspond $3^{\circ} 36'$ per year of the rotational motion of the heavens. (8) He also said that from the quarter of a day in the solar year, $1/300$ of a day, which amounts to $1^{\circ} 12'$ of the rotation of the orb, is lacking. (9) And when this number is subtracted from $3^{\circ} 36'$, there will be a remainder of $2^{\circ} 24'$. (10) And according to this the solar year from a fixed star to its return to the same <star> will have an excess of $1/150$ of a day. (11) The Arab scholars said that the motion of the fixed stars is one degree in 66 years, to which correspond $5^{\circ} 27'$ according to the aforementioned method. (12) But they said that in the solar year there is a decrease of $1/115$ of a day, to which correspond $3^{\circ} 13'$. When this is subtracted from that which corresponds to the motion of the fixed stars, there will be a remainder of $2^{\circ} 14'$. (13) Other masters of the observations, most profound researchers, found that the motion of the fixed stars is one degree in 70 years, to which correspond $5^{\circ} 9'$ per year, and according to their reckoning the decrease of the solar year from a quarter-<day> is $2^{\circ} 45'$. When this is subtracted from the aforementioned number, there is a remainder of $2^{\circ} 24'$, as Ptolemy posits.

4. (1) All the scholars of the stars call the point where the length of the day equals the night the head of the sign of Aries, because the constellation of Aries is close to it according to what is seen. (2) The remaining signs were divided according to their constellation following that example <of Aries>. (3) The Indian scholars, however, divided the orb of the signs according to what appeared to their eyes, according to what they have tested and proved in the judgments one generation after the other, and this division is according to the constellations seen in the orb of the signs, that is, the eighth orb.

<7. On the great conjunction of the year 1067>

1. (1) When we examined the great conjunction that took place in the earthy signs, we ourselves found Saturnus in Sagittarius 28° , in the year of the Arabs 438, and we found towards the end of that year, that is the year of Christ 1047, that Jupiter just entered the first degrees of Capricorn according to the division of the signs, and both were in the constellation of Sagittarius. (2) Therefore, the beginning of the year of the conjunction was in the year of the Arabs 459 on the 25th day of the

fourth month, and, according to the Christians, on the 14th day of March in the year of Christ 1067. (3) And since we wish to know the degree of the ascendant in the place of the equal line, which is called Aryn, (4) and we already know that the longitude of Winchester from the Occident is 19° and that its longitude from the middle of the world is 71°, which amount to 4 hours and 44 minutes, and the uniform motion of the Sun in these hours and minutes is 11 minutes and 40 seconds, (5) we find the motion of the Sun in the collected years 1049 and in the expanded years 17 completed, and the mean motion of the Sun was 11 signs, 14 degrees, 46 minutes 40 seconds, from which are reduced 11 minutes and 40 seconds, and there will be a remainder of 11 signs, 14 degrees, 34 minutes, 0 second. (6) We also made provisions to know the place of the Sun's apogee, for which it is necessary to subtract 33 years from 1100 years, which are the root of the apogees. (7) And the motion of the apogee in these 33 years is 28 minutes. We subtracted these from the place in the written table, which is 2 signs, 26 degrees, and 14 minutes, and there was a remainder of 2 signs, 25 degrees, and 46 minutes. (8) And the equation of the Sun was of 1 degree, 58 minutes, and 48 seconds. (9) We subtracted this from the beginning of Aries, and the remainder was 11 signs, 28 degrees, 1 minute, 12 seconds. (10) From this we also subtracted the aforementioned number that comes from the collected and expanded years, and the remainder was 13 degrees, 27 minutes, 12 seconds. (11) From this we also subtracted what we found for the motion of the Sun in 13 days, and the remainder was 0° 34' 24". (12) To this number correspond according to the motion of the Sun 19 hours, 34 minutes, and this revolution of the year at the place of the equal line and the ascendant degree is 25° 24' of the sign of Aries, and the entrance of the Sun into the head of Aries in this place, which is Winchester, was at 14 hours and 50 minutes after noon and these fractions were 5/6 of an hour, which are 10 minutes, and this took place in the 9th hour of the night according to the 312° degrees of the ascensions of the country, and the ascendant sign was 9° 43' of the sign of Capricorn. (13) These are the positions of the planets: Sun, 0.0.0; Moon, 10.22.28; Head of the Dragon, 5.11.30.14; Saturn, 5.14.55, retrograde; Jupiter, 5.2.1, also retrograde; Mars, 0.14.26; Venus, 0.7.15; Mercury, 11.9.7. (14) And this is the position of Saturn and Jupiter at the moment of their conjunction according to the tables I myself composed: Saturn, 5.12.23.17; its equated position, 5.18.51; Jupiter, 5.18.22.46, its equated position, 5.18.51; Sun, 5.18.54.41; its equated position, 5.16.57. (15) I also equated the positions of the planets according to the method of Al Battānī, al-Ma'mūn, al-Šūfī, and al Mazkar; there is a disagreement among them regarding the position of the apogee of the Sun, and this is because it is impossible for the examiner to know the position of the apogee except by means of instruments. (16) But in this there is a great difficulty because no instrument can be made in which seconds can be discerned. And if the years are multiplied, the seconds can grow to a perceptible quantity. (17) I also found their conjunction on

the day on which the Sun was conjoined with them within two days, namely after the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter, in one degree and one minute, and this took place after five completed days in the month of September of the year 1067 according to the years of the Christians. (18) And according to the Arabs this is after 23 days of the month of Shawwāl, which is the tenth month in their reckoning of the year 459 from the beginning of their reign. (19) These are the positions of the other planets on the day of this conjunction: Mars, 4.7.13; Venus, 4.9.5; Mercury, 6.12.25; Moon, 3.10.12; the Head of the Dragon was near its position on the day of opposition. (20) It was certainly necessary for me to know the Sun-Moon opposition that happened before this conjunction on 26 August: mean motion of the Sun, 5.11.1.26; mean motion of the Moon, 11.7.50.24; portion of the Moon at noon of this day, 7.2.39.52. (21) The opposition was in Pisces $8^{\circ} 59' 1''$; the position of the Head of the Dragon at the moment of the opposition, 5.6.50.48. The latitude of the Moon was only 11 minutes and for this reason what it signifies is complete. (22) The ascendant in Winchester is $18^{\circ} 17'$ Libra and on the equal line it is $10^{\circ} 5'$ Capricorn.

Here follow the three horoscopes printed on p. 254–256 above.

**< II. AL-KINDĪ (?): BOOK OF THE JUDGEMENTS OF THE REVOLUTIONS
OF THE YEARS OF THE WORLD, FIRST TREATISE >**

1. (1) The translator said: I shall now translate a tractate from Arabic into Hebrew on the judgements of the world-years compiled by Ya'qub, the son of Isaac al-Kindī. This is the beginning of his treatise.
2. (1) Since all astrologers [lit. judges of the stars] agree that the judgments of universal or general matters depend on the conjunction of the two upper <planets> [i.e., Saturn and Jupiter], I shall start from the beginning of their conjunction in the signs of the triplicities. (2) For from the fiery signs they shift to the earthy signs. (3) You need to look at the chart of the configuration of the orb of the signs [i.e., the horoscope]. (4) Know the sign of the conjunctions to which belongs one of the parts or regions of the Earth. (5) You also need to find out, to the best of your ability, the degree of the ascendant at the moment when the Sun enters the sign or the constellation of Aries. This time is to be obtained from the tables compiled by the method of observation: <adding> $8^{\circ} 45' 30''$. (6) The Sun enters the constellation of Aries between the 22nd and 23rd day of March. (7) Calculate <the positions of> the planets according to this day and hour, and subtract the aforementioned number from the position of the Moon and from the position of the remaining five planets. (8) Also calculate, as precisely as you can, the conjunction or opposition of the luminaries, the one of the two that is nearest to

<the moment> before the Sun enters the beginning of Aries in the year in which the two upper <planets> conjoin. (9) Examine the sign of the nation under consideration, and also the sign of the country or region under consideration, and their position with respect to the sign of the conjunction and to the ascendant sign at the time of conjunction or opposition of the Sun and Moon. (10) Likewise, observe the disposition of the planets and the lord of the sign of the nation and of the city, whichever it may be. (11) It is also very necessary to take notice of the ascendant sign at the beginning of the year, to find out which planet is in a cardine, in a <place> succedent to a cardine, or in <place> falling from a cardine, and how the planets are configured with respect to the Sun.

3. (1) Always relate the Sun to kings, great princes or magnates; Saturn to ancient people and cultivators; Jupiter to judges and priests; Mars to soldiers, warriors and surgeons; Venus to women, physicians and eunuchs; Mercury to scholars, scribes and traders; the Moon to common people in general.

4. (1) Enoch, who is Hermes, says that Aries and Jupiter signify portions of Alaerac, that is, Iraq, which is in the land of the Persians, and there is Babylonia and Baghdad. (2) Saturn with Libra <signify> Rome and the lands of the Christians or the uncircumcised. (3) The Sun with Aquarius <signify> the land of the Jews, that is, Judea, up to Egypt. (4) Capricorn with Mercury <signify> the land of al-Hind?, that is, of the Indians. (5) Venus with Scorpio <signify> the lands of the Cumeans, that is, the Arabs. (6) Leo with Mars <signify> those who live in the seventh climate. (7) The Moon with Virgo <signify> portions of China.

5. (1) The scholars of Babylon spoke of the regions of the Earth. (2) They said that Aries signifies Persia, Azerbaijan, Galatia, Philistin, that is Palestine, Babylon, Valgaa, Mosul, that is, Assyria. (3) Taurus <signifies> Isfahan, Mea (Māhān?), Caberas, Asia Minor, and the mountains of Deberaz (Kurds?), the mountains are very large. (4) Gemini <signifies> Jīlān, Margaan (Mūqān?), Tabaristan, Greater Armenia, Azerbaijan, Jurjān, Camaniaa (Kirman?), Alarquia, Abarabalini, the angle of the West and Egypt, and the land of Barqa. (5) Cancer <signifies> Africa, Philestin, that is, Palestine, Parnessie, the land of the Christians, that is, the uncircumcised, Romania, Lesser Armenia, the eastern part of Khurāsān, Marca, Baldar (Balkh?), and Iraq. (6) Leo <signifies> the land of Alterath, that is, the land of the Turks, Bascetar, Italy, Rome, Great Britain, the land of Hemes, Damascus, the reign of Assur, Atup (Kūfā?), Alboster (Arbashaḥr/Basra?), and Gog et Magog. (7) Virgo <signifies> the land of Constantinople, Acristas, the sea of the Palestinians, Canaan, and Segastaa. (8) Libra <signifies> the land of Cahara (saḥāra?), Sigistān, Ṭukhāristān, Miscemat, Timas, which is a major city in the land of the Indians, the river of Egypt, and the land of Ethiopia. (9) Scorpio <signifies> Alhagan (Hejaz), Emal (Yemen?), Tangier, Harbar Samara, Soria, Soaz, Canat, Caana, Thersoz Aendaria, Placania, Cuin, Allaaz, Aabdaeri, and the Arabs. (10) Sagittarius

<signifies> Alumin (Yemen?), Sardinia, Hispania, Sicily, and Arabia of the Ancients. (11) Capricorn <signifies> India, Alchoz (al-khabsha?), Makrān, Ahwāz, Aaraquia, Metarmonia, that is, Macedonia, Halaoham, the Ethiopians, the river Makrān (Indus), that is, of Egypt, Shaṭṭ al-Baḥr (the coast), Omān, and Alerchenaz up to the land of China. (12) Aquarius <signifies> Assyria, Nota (Kūfa?), Ballac, Sceaz, Bascea, Lonia, Aoquia, Asia, and the land of Egypt with its shares in the land of Persia. (13) Pisces <signifies> Lactabia, which is Anglia according to some people, Ballac, Asania, Heurenia, Nicaz, Lascemoperaz, Paresalia, the land of Altin, Gangaen, the Red Sea, and he selected Yemen, that is, the Sea of Scena, and Malamonia. (14) It also signifies the land of Ethiopia, Alexandria, and part of the lands of the Christians, that is, the uncircumcised.

6. (1) Baldac, that is, Baghdad, whose sign is Cancer 24°, is in the fourth climate. (2) The same applies to Jerusalem, but its sign is Leo 19°. (3) The sign of Egypt is Capricorn; of Cartagena is Gemini, of Toledo is Virgo; of Granada is Cancer; of Seville is Pisces; of Valencia is Scorpio; of Saragossa is Aries; of Pisa is Aquarius; of Lucca is Cancer. (4) Virgo with the Moon <governs> Persia and the land of Syria; Leo with Mars, the seventh climate; Scorpio with Venus, the land of Mecca up to Egypt. (5) These things were discovered through the experience of great events.

< III. AL-KINDĪ (?): BOOK OF THE JUDGEMENTS OF THE REVOLUTIONS OF THE YEARS OF THE WORLD, SECOND TREATISE >

1. (1) The translator said: I shall now translate from Arabic a famous treatise compiled by Ya'qub, the son of Isaac al-Kindī, who was very learned in all the sciences, methods and matters, and possessed many books. (2) This man said that he received true statements on matters related to the conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter from the statements of the Ancients. (3) He himself spoke about wars, rains, years of dearth and generally about the accidents of the world. (4) This is the beginning of his treatise.

2. (1) One must always consider the beginning of the year of the conjunction in a triplicity, because it does not matter whether the triplicity is fiery, earthy, airy or watery. (2) Consider carefully so as to know the degree of the ascendant under the equal line, where the middle of the world is, at the moment of the conjunction or opposition of the luminaries that takes place before the Sun enters the beginning of Aries, because this is the beginning of the revolution of the world-year or orb. (3) Know also the sign of the revolution, and likewise the sign of the ascendant of the place under consideration at the moment of the conjunction or opposition and at the moment of the revolution of the year, and the sign of the ascendant in the place or city under consideration, as well as the position of the Moon with precision, because it is necessary to know the degree of the revolution of the year

to know which planets are in the cardines, or in the <places> succedent to the cardines, or in the <places> falling from the cardines, and their configuration with respect to the Sun, and what their dignities in their positions are, and whether they are in signs similar or contrary to their nature, also what the sign of the world is, and which <planet> rules them and aspects any degree of the ascendant from the position of the Moon, and which <planet> aspects a fortunate and unfortunate <position> according to the nature of the planets when the direction [*tasyīr*] reaches it, either according to the motion of the planets to the position of a fortunate or unfortunate planet in agreement with its nature, or <according to> their rays in equal degrees.

3. (1) Māshā'allāh says: the degree of the ascendant must always be led or directed to know the genus of that region, and likewise the Moon, <and> the tenth <horoscopic> place to know the state of the kings. (2) He also says that the Sun signifies kings. (3) For if the Sun is unfortunate and <also> Jupiter, a misfortune will befall the king of al-'Irāq. (4) If the Sun is unfortunate with Saturn, a misfortune will befall the king of India. (5) If the Sun <is unfortunate> with Mars, a misfortune will befall the king of al-'Irāq, that is, of the Turks, and the lord or prince of the seventh climate. (6) If the Sun <is unfortunate> with Venus, a misfortune will befall the king of the Arabs. (7) If the Sun <is unfortunate> with Mercury, a misfortune will befall the king of the Romans, that is, of Christians. (8) If the Sun <is unfortunate> with the Moon, a general misfortune will befall the kings and all their subjects.

4. (1) Abū Ma'shar said: You must examine in the year under consideration the sign of the profection from the sign and degree of the conjunction in equal degrees. (2) Observe, if some <planet> aspects the sign of the profection [also *tasyīr*] at the beginning of the conjunction, or at the moment of the revolution of the world-year, assign to every degree 12 days, and half a day, and the sixth of one day. (3) He gave an example: the sign of the profection <moves> from Libra 8° to Scorpio 8°; Jupiter is at Libra 12°; Saturn is at Scorpio 2° 30'. (4) You need to know that any region or city whose sign is Libra will be strengthened in that year if Venus is similarly fortunate at the beginning of the conjunction and in the revolution of the year; the contrary applies if it [Venus] is unfortunate. If in the conjunction this is fortunate and in the revolution unfortunate, there will be a small defect of good fortune; but if in the conjunction this is unfortunate and in the revolution fortunate, there will be a small defect of bad fortune. (5) Since the longitude is 4°, good fortune will come to any place whose sign is Libra after 49 days. (6) The profection will reach the position of Saturn after ten months, which will signify diseases, diarrhea or constipation, and this will also signify wars, because Saturn is in the house of Mars and in its [Mars's] term.

5. (1) Kanakah, the Indian, said: attention must always be paid to the power of the twelfths of the degree of the ascendant, because the power of that <twelfth> which you have entered will be in the place in which the number of the signs will be completed, namely, the sign in which the number will be completed. (2) <Example:> The degree of the revolution of the year is Cancer 18° 30', then the degree of the twelfth will reach Aquarius 12°. (3) If the configuration of the stars is fortunate, good fortune will come to any place whose sign is Aquarius, and conversely if it is unfortunate. (4) You must also pay attention to the sign of the profection. Likewise, pay attention if something fortunate or unfortunate is removed according to the configuration of the stars with respect to the position of any place whose sign is the sign of the profection. (5) Know that Saturn signifies an ancient or bygone kingdom, which was in existence before the beginning of the conjunction of the triplicity. (6) Jupiter signifies a new or existing kingdom.

6. (1) Examine also in their conjunction which of them prevails over the other. (2) For the one that is closer to the apogee of its epicycle prevails over the other, and you will be able to know this by the calculated argument of Saturn and Jupiter. (3) You also need to observe which of them is closer to the apogee of the eccentric circle, and you will be able to know this by the calculated centers. The one that is closer to the apogee will prevail. (4) You also need to take into account their latitudes. For the one with a northern latitude will be victorious over the one that is in the line of the signs. The one that is in the line of the signs will be victorious over the other the one that is southern. If both are northern, the one with most northern latitude is victorious. If both are southern, the one with the smaller latitude is victorious. If both <are> in the line of the signs, Saturn will be victorious because it is the higher.

7. (1) You also need to take into consideration their powers according to their dignities in the position of the conjunction, that is, the dignity of house, exaltation, triplicity, term and decan; <you also need to take into consideration> which of them in the revolution of the year rules the ascendant sign in the place under consideration, the place of the Sun, the place of the Moon, and the place of the conjunction or opposition of the luminaries that preceded the entrance of the Sun into Aries, and also the place of the lot of Fortune.

8. (1) Māshā'allāh also says: you need to scrutinize in any revolution the planet that is oriental of the Sun, because it is partner in the lordship of the year. (2) If the degree <of the oriental planet> is in one of the cardines, forming an aspect to any place, then the power is greater. (3) If it is occidental of the Moon, then its power is very great.

9. (1) You also always need to examine which of them rules the five places of dignities at the time of the conjunction or opposition of the luminaries preceding

the entrance of the Sun in Aries. (2) If it [i.e., which of them rules] gives its power to an upper planet, you must judge according to the nature of the planet receiving the power. (3) You must combine the nature of the dignities with the nature of the planet according to the house and the sign in which the receiver of power is. (4) If the planet receiving power is retrograde, it will send that power back to the planet that gave it. (5) The same applies if it is under the rays of the Sun within 15°.

10. (1) The scholars of India also said that one must always observe the 28 lunar mansions in any revolution of the year, at the time of the conjunction or opposition of the luminaries preceding the entrance of the Sun into the point where the day is equal to the night; and you must do this in the same manner in any month. (2) You always need to put as the root the conjunction or opposition of the luminaries that preceded the beginning of the revolution of the year in which the upper <planets> conjoined, because whatever is signified by this is general or universal. (3) The revolution of the year in which took place the conjunction of the 20 years signifies particular things, also the revolution of each year signifies the particular of the particular. (4) Moreover, the revolutions of the months signify the particulars of the particulars of the single things themselves.

11. (1) They also said that one must take into account which <planet> rules the revolution of the year, for it is the lord of the sign of the profection, or the lord of the end of the direction from the place of the great conjunction, or the lord of the revolution of the year either by aspect or by direction. (2) If, I say, Saturn, or Venus, or Mercury, or the Moon, is the lord, the year will be rainy, with plenty of rain, even more so if this lord is in a watery sign, or in a sign signifying water, like Aquarius and the end of Capricorn, for there it sheds water earlier and later, or Leo, where there is the shape of a ship. (3) If you want to know whether it will rain at the beginning or at the end of the year, observe the position of Venus at the moment of the entrance of the Sun in Libra. (4) If, I say, <Venus is> under the rays of the Sun and occidental, the rain will increase in the first half of the year and will decrease in the second half. (5) If Venus is seen and oriental <of the Sun>, the rain will be moderate in the first half of the year and the opposite in the second.

12. (1) Always pay attention to the 12 keys of the Moon. (2) The first is the moment of the conjunction of the Sun and Moon; the second is when the distance from the Sun is 12°; the third <is when the distance from the Sun is> 45°; the fourth, 90°; the fifth, 135°; the sixth, 168°; the seventh, 180°; the eighth, 192°; the ninth, 225°; the tenth, 270°; the eleventh, 315°; the twelfth, 348°.

13. (1) There are six lunar mansions signifying humidity, as follows: 4. *al-dabarān*; 12. *al-ṣarfa*; 16. *al-zubānā*; 17. *al-iklil*; 22. *sa'd al-dhābiḥ*; 27. *al-fargh al-mu'akhkhar*. (2) There are six dry mansions: 2. *al-buṭayn*, 6. *al-han'a*, 9. *al-ṭarf*, 18. *al-kalabe*, 25. *sa'd al-akhbiya*, 26 *al-fargh al-awwal*. (3) The other mansions are temperate or moderate.

(4) You will be able to know the mansions in this manner: Take into consideration in which mansion the Moon is seen in the month under consideration and always subtract 9 equal degrees at this time from the position of the Sun and the Moon and likewise from the position of the other planets, so as to know the disposition or figure of the heavens of stars, and you need to begin from *al-naṭḥ*, that is *alsaris*, that is the ram's horns.

14. (1) All the Ancients and those who follow them agree that a planet conjoins another planet or aspects it in any aspect as long as it moves towards its aspect. (2) But in this point the scholars of the stars disagree, for some of them say that this will be so when there are less than 6° between them. (3) Others said that this is according to the number of degrees of the spark of the planets. (4) For the spark of Saturn and Jupiter is 9°, Mars 8°, and Venus and Mercury 7°. (5) Others also said that the aspect is completed if, in the case of sextile, it is 60° ahead of or behind and arrives at this number. (6) A lower planet that gives its power to an upper planet is still in the domain in which it was at the beginning, or before. (7) For it may happen that an aspect is completed and that an upper <planet> moves towards another upper <planet> close to it, if it is direct <in its motion>. (8) If it is retrograde, it sometimes happens that a ray or aspect is completed in the domain in which it was not before. (9) This also happens to planets when the upper one is quick in its course and the lower one is slow. (10) Moreover, the truth of this is that the aspect must be weakened when the inferior <planet> begins to be under the spark of the upper <planet>, in conjunction and not in aspect. (11) And do not count the light or the spark with the beginning of the spark but the body with the body, the number with the number of the spark or light of the upper planet, and when it reaches the spark exactly at the number of 60°, it is in sextile ahead of or behind, and at the number of 90° it is in quartile, and at the number of 120° it is in trine, and at the number of 180° it is in opposition. (12) Then the power of the aspect is the greatest, for then it shows its effect.

15. (1) Māshā'allāh says: if the receiver of power is in a mobile sign, it will nearly give the number of its days. (2) The rule is that the mobile signs signify quickness, the fixed <signify> permanence, and the common <signify> moderateness. (3) The root about rain of all the aforesaid <elements> is that the houses of the luminaries are opposite Saturn's houses. (4) When at the moment of their conjunction or opposition they are with Saturn or form an aspect with it, they signify obscurity of the sky and heavy rain. (5) Combine the disposition of the mansions of the Moon with the aforesaid <elements>. (6) Jupiter with Mercury signifies winds, as does Venus in conjunction with Mars when separating <from conjunction> or under its ray or spark. (7) Pay attention if Mars is occidental <of the Sun> or in the watery signs, because this signifies rains, great lightning and thunder. (8) Likewise observe the Moon at the time of conjunction; if, I say, the Moon then, or in the

following quarter <of the month>, or when in opposition <to the Sun> conjoins a planet or forms an aspect with it, except for the Sun, this signifies clear sky until the next quarter <of the month>. (9) You must also observe the cardines in the place under consideration. For if the significator of rain is in any of the cardines of that place, the power of the rain will manifest itself there. (10) If it is in the intermediate <horoscopic> places, between them, I say, and the ascendant, in the binding of an aspect, there will be moderate rain, and if in the cadent <horoscopic places>, there will not be <rain>.

16. (1) The scholars of Persia said: when Venus, the Moon and Mercury are in the humid lunar mansions, this signifies heavy rain, when the revolution of the year <takes place in the humid lunar mansions it> signifies a rainy year, in the day of their conjunction or when it reaches an aspect in one degree, then there will rain, and even more so if the Moon is in one of its 12 keys, as I explained above.

17. (1) I will reconsider now the statement of Ptolemy, the wise, who said that the power of a planet is always manifested according to its nature when it is in the line of the orb of the signs and <when> it is direct <in its motion>. (2) If it is northern its power will increase, and if it is southern its power decreases. (3) If it is in the apogee, it will not manifest its power, or only moderately. (4) If it is opposite its apogee, then it will manifest its power greatly. But the scholars of India said the contrary. (5) I myself say that either statement is true, because every corporeal thing, like rain, cold and heat, is in its essence according to Ptolemy's statement, but in spiritual things, like exaltation, power, victory and dignity, it will be according to the statement of the scholars of India.

18. (1) I will now give you a common and general rule to know the essence of cold, heat, humidity and dryness. (2) Take always into consideration whether Saturn and Jupiter are in the figures of the uppermost circle, for Saturn signifies time in its entirety and Jupiter the year. (3) Examine, I say, the moment of the entrance of the Sun in the head of the mobile signs and observe whether the two upper <planets> are in hot signs, because then this quarter of the year will be hot; and if in cold <signs>, <then this quarter of the year> will be cold; and if in humid <signs>, <then this quarter of the year> will be humid; and if they are in different places, as when one is in a hot sign and the other in a cold <sign>, this quarter will be temperate, and the same applies to humidity and dryness. (4) What I have just said is one testimony. (5) The second testimony is when the lord of the year is mixed with the upper <planets>, then you will judge by two testimonies. (6) If their places and nature are diverse, find out which of them has more power. (7) For if one of the upper <planets> is oriental <of the Sun>, <its> power is greater than if it were occidental <of the Sun>, and the opposite applies to the inferior planets. (8) The science of the lord of year consists in knowing the planet that has the greatest power in the five places of dignities at the beginning of the revolution of the year.

19. (1) Māshā'allāh said that one needs to associate the lord of the year with the planet that is in one of the cardines of the ascendant sign at the beginning of the year, and you must do the same thing <at the beginning> of every month, and in the first quarter, in the middle of the month, and in the second quarter <of the month>. (2) Here again, the days of the keys of the Moon are to be taken into consideration.

20. (1) Moreover, Abū Ma'shar said: the great key of rain is when Saturn conjoins the Sun at the moment of the conjunction or opposition <of the luminaries>, or when it is in any aspect to it, at the moment of keys of the Moon, because then it signifies heavy rain for many days. (2) The small key is the conjunction of one planet, in its body or by aspect, with a planet that is the lord of the house of its detriment or destruction, as if Mercury conjoins Jupiter, for this signifies humidity with a strong wind; likewise, Venus with Mars <signifies> humidity with lightning and thunder; the Moon with Saturn signifies a strong frost and snow in the winter. (3) Abū Ma'shar also said that he has tested for many years that when three planets conjoin in a watery sign, it signifies humidity.

21. (1) Kanakah, the Indian also said: if the sign of the conjunction or the opposition <of the luminaries> is one of the watery signs, this signifies rain, all the more so if the lord of the year aspects the place of the conjunction, and the same applies to the opposition. (2) If the lord of the year is in opposition to the conjunction of the sign, then the signification is stronger. (3) If the place of the conjunction or opposition is in one of the cardines of the ascendant sign, then the matter will be much stronger. (4) There will be rain when the Moon in its variable motion reaches the degree of the ascendant sign, and this has been tested. (5) The retrogradation of a planet when it is northern signifies humidity, even more so if this takes place in one of the watery signs and the Moon at the moment of conjunction or opposition gives power to the lord of the house of the conjunction or opposition or to that <planet> that has a dignity in the aforementioned place. (6) This signifies rain and the time of the event will be according to the number of degrees between the Moon and the ray of the planet, by conjunction or aspect, that is, according to the complement of the number. (7) For if there are three degrees between them, there will rain after three days from the retrogradation of the planet until the time of its opposition to the Sun. (8) If this is about the upper <planets>, it signifies humidity according to the signification from the time of its opposition to the Sun up to its second station. (9) The same applies to the inferior planets by its method, whereby it is common to from the beginning of the first station up to the opposition to the Sun or up to the opposition to the apogee of the epicycle, but it does not apply from this place up to the second station. (10) As a general rule rain is more signified by the time when the Moon separates from the conjunction or opposition to the Sun and gives power to a retrograde planet than when it gives

power to a direct <planet>. (11) But if the planet is in the second station, it signifies clear or serene weather up to the quarter when it is close to the opposition to its place.

22. (1) Sahl, the Jew, also said: you must take account, for the day under consideration, of the lot of weather, which you will know in this way. (2) You need to measure, for the day under consideration, the longitude between the place of the Sun and that of Saturn, and cast this number from the place of the Moon in the morning, at sunrise, and look whether this lot falls in one of Saturn's houses, because this signifies obscurity of the sky if Saturn aspects it and if it is in any of the lunar mansions signifying rain. (3) If the Moon falls in one of the houses of Jupiter or Mercury, this signifies winds, and this is even more so if the lord of the lot is in a sign signifying wind. (4) If it is in the houses of Venus, it signifies humidity, and this is even more so if it is in any of the lunar mansions signifying rain. (5) If it is in the houses of Mars, it signifies clear and serene weather unless this lot is in Scorpio and Mars is in a watery sign, because then the sky will not be completely serene. (6) If it is in the house of the Sun, the sky will be serene, and if in the house of the Moon, then it signifies humidity. (7) All this is true if the lord of the lot aspects this lot.

23. (1) Māshā'allāh puts forward a general opinion, saying: take into consideration in the revolution of the year and observe the conjunction or opposition that took place in its beginning. (2) If the Moon is in conjunction with an unfortunate <planet> and similarly the degree of the conjunction or opposition either by conjunction or by aspect, and they are in the cardines of the ascendant sign, this signifies an unfortunate year as a result of diseases and death according to the nature of the unfortunate <planet>. (3) For Mars signifies heat and wars, all the more so if it is in a sign of human shape, but the Moon signifies any man in general. (4) If the Moon is with Saturn, this signifies serious and chronic diseases, particularly if Saturn is in an earthy sign. (5) If the Moon in the revolution of the year is in a cadent place and gives power to Jupiter or Venus, while these are not in cadent places, this signifies that many people will pass from affliction to liberty, and the contrary applies if the Moon is in a fortunate place and gives power to a falling planet, all the more so if the planet is unfortunate. (6) Know that the place of Mars signifies the places of wars.

24. (1) Abū Ma'shar said: you must always pay attention to the sign of the profection at the beginning of the great conjunction in the triplicity, and likewise at the beginning of the conjunction of the upper <planets> in 20 years. (2) Direct the place of the first conjunction by equal degrees and similarly by the ascension degrees of the place under consideration. (3) In the year in which it reaches exactly the place of Mars or the degree of its first place, or its conjunction, then they signify wars. (4) One must proceed in the same way in the judgement of the nature

of any planet. (5) In any year in which Saturn is in quartile with Jupiter, and they are in the cardines of the first conjunction, it signifies quarrel of kings, and if Mars is there, investigate when new wars will break out.

25. (1) Know that there is a disagreement among the Ancients about the fiery signs. (2) For all say that the signs of the conjunctions are in charge of the eastern side, but Ptolemy says that their signification is on the northern side. (3) All the Ancients and also Ptolemy agree that the airy signs signify the occident. (4) All the Ancients say that the earthy <signs> are southern and the watery <signs> are northern. (5) Ptolemy agrees that the earthy signs are southern but he says that the fiery are northern.

26. (1) Abū Ma'shar also says that he has tested many times that when a year signifies wars this is because Mars enters under the burning of the Sun, which are 6 degrees, or <because> Jupiter has a dignity in the ascendant sign at the moment of the conjunction or opposition that preceded the revolution. (2) In any year in which a planet returns to its place at the beginning of the year of a great conjunction, then it is linked with its ray and according to its power, something will be renewed in this year in accordance with the nature of the planet. (3) If the planet is a benefic and is the lord of the 6th, 8th or 12th <horoscopic> place according to the ascendant at the moment of the conjunction or opposition that preceded the revolution of the year, it will reduce its benefic effect. (4) If it is an unfortunate <planet>, this will augment <and cause> pain over pain. (5) If a fortunate <planet> is in one of the cardines of the city under consideration, then it will be better, but if it is an unfortunate <planet>, it will then be worse. (6) If the sign of the city under consideration is not known to you, consider the great misfortune that will happen to that city. (7) You will be able to know its sign at the time of foundation of the city according to the method of reason.

[Colophon] This ends the Book on the judgments of the revolutions of the world-years compiled by Ya'qub, the son of Isaac al-Kindī. This book was completed when Cancer was raising, and when the Moon was in conjunction with Jupiter in it, the third of September in the year of the Lord 1278, in Mechelen, translated from Hebrew into Latin by Henry Bate, at the request of Iohannes of Milana.

III. EDITION OF THE MIDDLE ENGLISH TEXT

III.1. *Introduction* (C. Philipp E. Nothaft)

MS *L* = London, Royal College of Physicians, 384 is an anthology of astrological and astronomical texts, most of them translated from Latin into Middle English. Its 112 folios were all written by a single scribe, whose English secretarial hand can be dated to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century (and after 1481).²²⁶ The texts assembled in *L* include, on fols. 83v–85r, a free Middle English translation of select passages of the tripartite text in *V*. Brief extracts from this translation were published in 2003 by John North, who attempted to interpret the astronomical data contained in it without knowledge of the fuller Latin version.²²⁷

While there is no reason to doubt that the Middle English text was translated from a Latin exemplar, the translator took certain liberties with the text, usually

²²⁶ For a full description of *L*, see David Juste's second contribution to this article. On astrological and astrology-adjacent texts in Middle English, see GEORGE R. KEISER, *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1500* (series editor ALBERT E. HARTUNG), vol. X, XXV. *Works of Science and Information*, The Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, New Haven (Conn.) 1998, p. 3611–3624, 3759–3785; JOHN D. NORTH, *Richard of Wallingford: An Edition of His Writings with Introductions, English Translation and Commentary*, 3 vols., Clarendon Press, Oxford 1976, vol. I, p. 181–243; vol. II, p. 94–97; LINNE R. MOONEY, « A Middle English Verse Compendium of Astrological Medicine », *Medical History*, 28 (1984), p. 406–419; MOONEY, *The Kalendarium of John Somer*, University of Georgia Press, Athens (Ga.) 1998, p. 195–203; IRMA TAAVITSAINEN, *Middle English Lunaries: A Study of the Genre*, Société Néophilologique, Helsinki 1988 (*Mémoires de la Société Néophilologique de Helsinki*, 47); LAUREL MEANS, « Electionary, Lunary, Destinary, and Questionary: Toward Defining Categories of Middle English Prognostic Material », *Studies in Philology*, 89 (1992), p. 367–403; MEANS, « Ffor as moche as yche man may not haue be astrolabe: Popular Middle English Variations on the Computus », *Speculum*, 67 (1992), p. 595–623; MEANS, *Medieval Lunar Astrology: A Collection of Representative Middle English Texts*, Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston (NY) 1992; LISTER M. MATHESON, ANN SHANNON, « A Treatise on the Election of Times », in LISTER M. MATHESON (ed.), *Popular and Practical Science of Medieval England*, Colleagues Press, East Lansing (Mich.) 1994, p. 23–59; HILARY CAREY, « Medieval Latin Astrology and the Cycles of Life: William English and English Medicine in Cambridge, Trinity College MS O.5.26 », in ANNA AKASOY, CHARLES BURNETT, RONIT YOELI-TLALIM (eds.), *Astro-Medicine: Astrology and Medicine, East and West*, SISMEL Edizioni del Galluzzo, Florence 2008 (*Micrologus' Library*, 25), p. 33–74; CARRIE GRIFFIN, *The Middle English Wise Book of Philosophy and Astronomy: A Parallel-Text Edition; Edited from London, British Library, MS Sloane 2453 with a Parallel Text from New York, Columbia University, MS Plimpton 260*, Universitätsverlag Winter, Heidelberg 2013 (*Middle English Texts*, 47); ISABEL DE LA CRUZ CABANILLAS, IRENE DIEGO RODRÍGUEZ, « Astrological Medicine in Middle English: The Case of *Pe Booke of Ypocras* », in MARÍA JOSÉ ESTEVE RAMOS, JOSÉ RAMÓN PRADO-PÉREZ (eds.), *Textual Reception and Cultural Debate in Medieval English Studies*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne 2018, p. 79–99.

²²⁷ These excerpts correspond to Part I, §7.1:12–14, 17–18, and §3.2–3. See NORTH « Winchester 1067 », p. 139–140.

by omission, but also by inserting synonyms and additional phrases as a means of clarification. Most of the passages he translated stem from the second of the two texts attributed to al-Kindī (i.e., Part III), but the degree to which these passages have been rearranged is rather drastic. Having placed the statement in the colophon in V at the beginning, the translator segued from §1 of Part I into a collage of different sections in Part III, jumping from §17 to §§10, 12, 13, 21, 4, and 9 (in this order). After a brief visit to the first two paragraphs of Part II, he abruptly switched again to the astronomical §7 of Part I, joining to it parts of §3 and §2 (again in this order). The closing section of his translation encompasses several more paragraphs from Part III (§§15–16, 18–20). It is also worth noting that his abridged rendering of Part I, §7, features several numerical variants compared to V, which at the very least suggests that the translation was not made from this particular manuscript. Similarly, in his rendering of Part III, §13:4, the translator probably worked with a Latin exemplar that read *ad sciendum dispositionem Lune sive figuram celi stellati* ('forto know the disposition of the Mone, or els the figure of the sterred hewyne'). In V, the word *Lune* is missing, once again indicating that it was not the basis for this translation.

In the transcription below, paragraph breaks have been set in a way so as to facilitate comparison with the edition of the Latin text. The corresponding Latin passage is indicated in square brackets at the start of each paragraph. Words and phrases without a direct counterpart in the Latin text are underlined, whereas the numerical variants in §7 of Part I are marked by « [!] ». As is the norm in critical editions, conjectural additions or emendations appear in pointed brackets. The occasional flourishes that the scribe added to words ending on *-on*, *-en*, or *-em* have been treated as decorative, meaning that preference was given to *coniunccion* over *coniunccione* or *coniunccioun*, to *uppon* over *uppone*, *men* over *mene*, *hem* over *heme*, and so on. The loop added to the root *signif-* has been interpreted as *signifi* or *signifis* depending on grammatical context. Otherwise, no attempt has been made to standardize or alter the spelling encountered in *L*.

III.2. *Edition*
(C. Philipp E. Nothaft)

I have wryten these thingis of the boke of domes of revolucions of the yeris of the world, the whiche Iacob the sone of Ysaak Alkyndy compyled, of the booke that was translate out of Ebrewe in to Latyne be Henry Bate.

[I, §1.1:3–9] After that the planetis be more or gretter or nyer to the erthe, after that her strenght shall appere the more. If the planet be within the part that is more within the orbe of his ententrill, or els in the opposite of his augis, his strenght shalle appere uppon the Erthe the more than²²⁸ it shoulde do if it were nye to the auge of his cercle. And therefore there is no place habitabil in the south parte of the erth, bycause of strenght of hete of the Sonne, for the Sonne is grettest of all other sterris that be seyne.²²⁹ The orbe of the signes in the which the fix sterris ben is the 8 orbe fro the erth. And all his sterris ben devyded into 48 thingis of the which 21 ben toward the northe fro the orbe of the signe and 15 toward the southe and 12 in the greete orbe the which <is the> gyrdell of the orbe of signis. And eche of these 12 partes or els divisions is clepyd in the name of an ymago the which is nye to hym in that orbe. The Mone and the other 5 planetis ben in the mydlyne of the orbe of the signis sumtyme and sumtyme thai passen that lyne alitel aswell on the right side as²³⁰ on the lyft syde. Fforsothe the Sonne kepith alway the myddel lyne of the orbe.

[III, §17] Ptholome saide that the strenght of the planet shal signifi after his nature when he is in the lyne of the orbe of the signes and he is direct. But forsoth, if he be septemtrionall, id est northly, his strenght shalbe the more, and if he be southe, his strenght shalbe the lesse. But if it be so that he be in auge, he shal not shew his strenght right muche. But forsoth, the wise men of Inde saide the contrarie of this. And trewly I sai that the word is trewe in eche of these. For eche bodely thinge, as is reyne or colde or hete, governeth and hathe hem self in his beyng after the worde of Ptholomee. But in gostly thingis of the sowle, as is exa<l>tacion, strenght, victorie and dignite, it shalbe after the worde of wise men of Inde.

[III, §10:1–2] The wise men of Ynde said that a man shall alway loke after the 28 mansions of the Mone in every revolucion of the yere in the houre of coniunccion or opposicion of the lightis the which precedith and got before the entringe of the Sonne into Aries. And do this also in every moneth. Thou owest alway to put fro the rote and²³¹ the grownde the coniunccion, or els the opposicion, of the lightis

²²⁸ than] the

²²⁹ seyne] seynene

²³⁰ as] os

²³¹ and] a.c. of

goyng before and precedinge the bygynnyng of the revolucion of the yere in the which the hiest planetis ben coniunct togeder.

[III, §10:2–11:2] Fforsothe, what so evyr be signified or betokenyd, be this is general or else comyne, and the revolucion of the yere in which the coniunccion fallith of 20 yere it signifis uppon the particulers. But forsothe, the revolucion of sy<n>guler yeris signifis upon the particulis of the particuler yere. And, more ovyr, the revolucions of monethtis signifi upon the particuler²³² of particulers of singuler yeris. They said also that it is to be considerd what planet gothe before and is lorde of the revolucion of the yere. For he is lorde of the signe of profeccion, or lorde of the terme of direccion fro the place of the grete coniunccion, or els lorde of the revolucion of the yere, or be aspect or be dyrection. And forsothe, if Saturne be lord, or Venus or Mercury or the Moone, it shalbe a reynye yere with muche multitude of reyne and it shalbe muche the strenght if the lorde be in a watry signe, or in a signe signifyinge upon the water, as is Aquarye and²³³ thende of Capricorne, ffor forsothe, that <is> the pourer²³⁴ or shedder of water bothe fyrst and last, id est before and behynde, or els the signe of Leo, where the figure of a shippe is.

[III, §12:1] Also a man must take hede to the 12 keys of the Moone.

[III, §13:1, 4] And forsoth, there be 6 mansions of the Mone signifis moistnes, id est the 4, the 12, the 16 and 17, the 22 and 27. And thou maist also have knowinge of the mansions [84r] in this manner: consider in what mansion the Mone is seyne in every moneth. Let alway be lessid and dimynut or withdraw that tyme fro the place of the Sonne and of the Mone and fro the placis of other planetis with degres equal forto know the disposicion of the Mone, or els the figure of the sterred hewyne, and that owist to bygyne the nomber fro the hornys of Aries.

[III, §21:1–4] Benaka of Inde said: if²³⁵ the signe of coniunccion, or els of opposicion, be any watry signe, and the lorde of the yere aspect the place of coniunccion, or els opposicion, that signifis reyne. But if the lorde of the yere be in opposit of the signe of coniunccion, then shall the significac<i>on be more stronge. And if the place of coniunccion, or els opposicion, be in any of the anguls of the signe ascendent, then shal thinge be more stronge. And there shalbe reyne when the Moone shall cum with his dyvers mewinge to the gree of the signe ascendent. And²³⁶ this is expert and prevyd.

[III, §21:5–7] The retrogradacion of a planet, when it is on the lefte²³⁷ and in any of the watry signis, it signifis humydites. And if the Moone be the hore of

²³² particuler] *add.* of particuler

²³³ and] in

²³⁴ pourer] power

²³⁵ if] of

²³⁶ And] in

²³⁷ lefte] *add.* planet

coniunccion or opposicion yewinge strenght to the lorde of the hous of coniunccion, or els of the opposicion, there beyng retrograde, or els to hem the which hath the dignite in the forsaid place, this forsoth signifis reyne and the tyme of hys commynge shalbe after the degrees the nombyr of²³⁸ whiche be bytwene the Mone and of the grees of the planet retrograde, be the coniunccion or els by aspect, that is to say after the fulfillinge of the number. And if there be betwene hem 3 degrees, there²³⁹ must nedys fall reyne within 3 dais.

[III, §4] Albu<masar> said: consider in every yere to the signe of perfeccion fro the signe of coniunccion and there²⁴⁰ after the degres that ben equal. And loke if there were any aspectinge signe of perfeccion in the bigynnyng of the coniunccion, or els in the hore of revolution of the yere of the world, and gife to every gree 12 dais and an half and the sext part of a day. And putteth an example the signe of perfeccion fro the 8 gree of Libra to the 8 gree of Scorpion. And Iupiter is in the 12 degree of Libra and Saturne in the 2 gree and 30 minute in Scorpion. Then thou owist to know that every region and cite of the which Libra is the signe shalbe fortified and made stronge in this yere, and if Venus also be fortunate in the bygynnyng of the coniunccion and revolution of the yere. And if Venus be infortunat it shalbe the contrarye. And if it be of goode beyng in the coniunccion and of evyll beyng in the revolution,²⁴¹ there shalbe a litell defaute fro goodenes. And if it be of evyl beyng in the coniunccion and of goode beyng in the revolution, there shalbe a litell defaute of evyl. And because the longitude is of 4 degrees, there shall cum goode to every place of the which Libra is signe after 49 dais and parve, id est a litel more, and perfeccion to the place of Saturne <after> 10 monethys. And there shalbe significacion of sekenes of the flux or of constipacion, id est cestifenes, and this shall signifie uppon bataile, for Saturne is in the hous of Mars and in his terme.

[III, §9] Yf a planet that is hyest and hath lordship uppon 5 placis of dignite, gife his strenght to the hyer²⁴² planet in the tyme of coniunccion or opposicion of the lightis goynge before and preceidinge the enteringe of the Sonne into Aries, then thou oewst to deme and shewe the strenght of the resaywinge after the kynde of the sterre. Also thou owist forto meddil the nature of the dignite with the nature of the planet after the hous and the signe in the which is the resewyer of strenght. And if the planet resaywinge the strenght be retrograde, it shall yeld that strenght to that planet the which that gafe it hem. And also it is in the same maner under the *radiis* of the Sonne into 15 degrees.

²³⁸ of] *add.* degres the

²³⁹ there] that

²⁴⁰ there] the

²⁴¹ revolution] *add.* and

²⁴² hyer] *a.c.* hyer; *p.c.* eyer

[II, §1:1–2:7] Iacob the sonne of Ysaak Alkyndy said that the domes of all planetis dependend and hongen of the bygynnyng of coniunccion of 2 the hiest in signes of triplicites. And take to the figure of disposicion of the orbe of the signis. And know the signe of coniunccion. And knowe the degree ascendant in the hore of entringe of the Sonne into the signe or els the fygure of Aries. And this tyme is forto be withdrawen of the tabils the whiche be made after the way of probacion of 8 grees and 45 minutis and 30 secundis. And the Sonne entrethe the ymage of the signe of Aries bytwene the 22 day of Marche and 23. And then make ewyne the planet to that dai and that hore and withdrawe the forsaid moneth fro the place of the Moone and fro the place of other 5 planetis.

[II, §2:12] The Sonne signifis uppon kyngis and princes that bene grete and other grete men. Saturne signifis olde men and tillors of the erthe. Iubiter domesmen and prestis. Mars knyghtis and mene of bataile and surgenes and surgery. Venus women. Mercury wisemen and scribes and merchandise. And the Mone is comparised and likend to the comune puple.

[I, §7.1:1–4, 12–14] The bygynnyng of the yere of the grete coniunccion of 2 hiest planetis in erthy signis was in the yere of Arabim 459 in the 25 dai of the 4 moneth. But forsothe, after Cristen men it was in the 14 day of Marche in the yere of Cryst 1067. The longitud Wynconie fro the [84v] est is 19 degrees. The longitud of hem fro the myddis of the wor<l>d is 71²⁴³ degrees, the which be worth 4 horis and 44 minutis of an hore. Ascendent in²⁴⁴ the place of an evyne lyne the which is clepyd Arim was the 25 <degree> ascendant and 24 minutis of Aries. But the entringe of the Sonne into the hed of Aries in this place the which is in Wynconia was but 14 horis and 50 minutis after the mydde day in the 9 hore of the night. And the asc<endant> was 9 <degrees> and 43 minutis of Capricorne. And these bene the placis of the planetis: the Sonne 0.0.0; the Mone in Aquare 22.28; the hed of the Dragon in Virgo 11; Saturne in Virgo 14.55, the which was retrograde; Iubite<r> in Virgo 2.1, retrograd<e> also; Mars in Aries 14.26; Venus 17.16[!] Ari<e>s; Mercury in Piscis 9.7. Also the place of coniunccion of hem after the table which y have made was 18.52[!] of Virgo.

[I, §7.1:17–22] And forsothe, also I founde of the coniunccion of theme in that day the which the Sonne was ioynid with hem by the space of 2 dais, that is to say, after the coniunccion of Saturne and Iubiter, in 0[!] degree and in 0[!] minute, and this was in 5 perfite dais of the moneth of Septembre in the yere of Our Lorde 1067 after the yere of Cristene men. And that is after the yere of Sarazens after the 23 day of the moneth of Zoall, the whiche is the 10 moneth in the number of her yeris 459²⁴⁵ fro the bygynnyng of the kyngdam of hem. And these ben the placis of other

²⁴³ 71] 11

²⁴⁴ in] a.c. from

²⁴⁵ 459] 1459

planetis in the day of that coniunccion: Mars 4.7.13; Venus 4.9.5; Mercury 6.12.25; Luna 3.10.12.4. The hed of the Dragon was nye to the place of hem in that of opposicion. Also the opposicion of the Sonne and the Moone precedinge the coniunccion of hem was the 26 day of August in the 8 degree, 59 minute, 2 2^a[!] of the signe of Piscis. And the place of the hede of the Dragon in the hore of the opposicion 5.6.50.48. And the latitude of the Moone was no more but 11 minutis and because of that²⁴⁶ that thinge that is signifyd is perfite. And the asc<endant> in Wynconia was 10[!] <degrees> and 7 minutis of Libra. But in the equinoxial lyne was the ascendent the 10[!] degree²⁴⁷ and the 5 minute of Capricorne.

[I, §3.2] The rote of the signes universal is after the 2 h<i>est planetis and the bigynnyng of the coniunccion of hem is in Aries. And after 20 yere thai shalbe commytte in Sagittare, and after other 20 yere in Leo, and thus it is done 12 or 13 tymes. And that shalbe in 240 yere or els in 260 yere. After this fyrie signes be changed into erthy signis after the way and the manner which thai had in the fyrie signes. And after this thai be changed into eyrie signes. And after that to waterie signes. And the coniunccion in triplicite is clepid the grete coniunccion. But forsoth, the coniunccion of 20 yere is clepid the lesse coniunccion.

[I, §3.3] And it is not possible to a man to²⁴⁸ fynde the minute of the coniunccion of hem, because of her slow mewinge. The placis, forsothe, of the planetis be fo<u>nden by instrumentis of prevyng, in the which secundis may not be designede, id est be rekoned. Wherefore the wise men of the domes of astrologis ben sustenid uppon the revolucion of the yere of the world and uppon the asc<endant> and placis of the lyne equall, or els of the myddis of the world, more over and uppon the ascendent of every place after his longitude and his latitude in the houre of coniunccion and opposicion of lightis to the revolucion of the yere and before the entringe of the Sonne into 4 meble signis and before the coniunccion of 2 of the hiest planetis. And this is the trewth.

[I, §3.4] And knowel that the signe of Ynde is Aquare and Leo is <the> signe of Cristen men and Scorpio with laid of Sarazens, because that in the terme of Venus was the coniunccion of the sect of Sarazens. Many also wise men loken after the coniunccion of Saturne and Mars, the which in all thingis is seene in 30 yere onys in the signe of Cancer.

[I, §2.6:5] Saturne signifis uppon olde folke and uppon olde kyngdam and Iupiter signifis uppon new folke and uppon newe kyngdam.

[III, §15] Also Messahalla saith: if the resayver of the strenght be in a noble signe, he shall as it were gife his number of days. And this same is generall <that>

²⁴⁶ of that] that of

²⁴⁷ degree] dignee

²⁴⁸ to] s.l.

the meble signis signifi hastin<g>es and fix signes signifi abyding and stedfastnes. And mene signes singifi meen. The rote of all thingis before said, that is to sai of reyne, is that the hous of lightis bene opposite to the hous of Saturne. But then when thai be with Saturne or els his aspectis in the hore of coniunccion or els opposicion, thai signifi darknes of eyre and muche reyne. And loke that thou meddell the disposicions of the mansions of the Mone with the same. Iubit<er> also with Mercury signifi windis. Venus with Mars, if Mars be occidentall or, els in wateri signes, signifi reyne and grete lightningis and thondres. Also take hede of the Moone in the hore of coniunccion and, forsoth, if the Mone be in the folowyng 4^a or in the opposite coniunct, id est ioynd, to the planet, or els in his aspect, except that that is of the Sonne, then this shalbe taken clerenes of wedden into that next quarter folowyng.²⁴⁹ Thou owest also to knowe the angul in eche placis, for if the significator of reyne be in any angul in that place, there shall the strenght of reyne be shewid. And if it be in the housys interm<ed>ys, id est bytwene hem and²⁵⁰ the asc<endant>, the aspect shalbe in ligacion, id est in byndinge, and so there shall fall a litell reyne. And if it be in the fallinge, id est cadent, there shall non be.

[III, §16] The wise men of Persayne saide also [85r] that when Venus, Mercury and Luna bene in moist mansions of the Mone that signifi grete reyne where the revolution of the yere shal signifi a reynye yere in the day of coniunction of hem, or els when thai cum to aspect in 0 degre<e>, thane shalbe reyne. And the reyne shalbe the more if the Mone be in any of the 12 kyyes after that that I have made pleyne and opyne byforne.

[III, §18] Now than I shall yewe the<e> a comen rule and a generall forto know the beyng, id est the kynde, of colde and hote and moistnes and drynes. Fforsoth thou shall alway consider to Saturne and Iubiter after that thai have them in the figur<i>s of the hyer cercle. For Saturne hath kynde forto signifi uppon the tyme of his totalite. And Iubiter hath forto signifi upon the yere. Thou shalt also consider to the hore and take hede of the entringe of the Sonne into the hedis of meble signis and loke if the 2 hiest planetis bene in the hote signis, for then the quarter shalbe in hete. And if it be in cold signis it shalbe in colde. And if it be in moist signis, it shalbe moist. And if it be in placis on like, as one in an hotte signe and another in a colde signe, that quarte shalbe temperate in the same moneth. Also it hath in moistnes and drynes. This than that I have said is o<ne> wittnes. The secunde witnes is when he is lorde of the yere comyxt and medlid with the hiest planetis. For then shall thou deme by 2 witnessis. But if the placis of hem and her beyng be divers, know well that the workyng of hem hath the more strenght.

²⁴⁹ folowyng] sewinge

²⁵⁰ and] in

Ffor if²⁵¹ one²⁵² of the hiest be oriental it is of more strenght than if it be occidental, but²⁵³ in the lower planetis eche thinge hath hem evyne the contrarye. Butt forsothe, the knowinge of the lorde of the yere is fortobe knownen the planet the which hathe more strenght uppon the 5 placis of dignites in the bygynnyng of the revolution of the yere.

[III, §19] Messahala also said that alway the lorde of the yere is forto be medlyd with the planet which shalbe in any of the co<r>ners or angullis of the signe asc<endant> in the bygynnyng of the yere. In the same manner also it is forto do in every²⁵⁴ moneth and in the first quarte. And in the myddis of the monethe. And in the 2 quarte. Yet forsothe is to consider the dais of the keys of the Mone.

[III, §20:1–2] Also evermore Albumysar said: the grete key of reyne is when Saturne is commyned with the Sonne in the hore of coniunction, or els opposicion, or els when he is in any of his aspectis in the houris of the keyes of the Moone, for then it shall signifi grete reyne duringe many days. A litell key is coniunccion of an other planet co<r>poral, or els be aspecte with the planet the which shalbe lorde of the hous. And if Mercury be ioyned with Iubiter for that signifis moistnes with grete winde. And also like Venus with Mars uppon moistnes with lightnyngis and thondringis. And the Mone with Saturne signifis grete frost and snowe in wynter.

Explicit liber iste.

²⁵¹ if] it

²⁵² one] s.l.

²⁵³ but] be

²⁵⁴ every] a.c. the

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TRADITION AND SUCCESS OF A PHYSICAL TREATISE

THE RECEPTION OF CONTARINI'S *DE ELEMENTIS*

IN THE LAST XVITH CENTURY*

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Abstract

This article aims to reconstruct the tradition of Gasparo Contarini's physical treatise *De elementis*, comparing all the extant witnesses. In the second part of the article, it is explored how the treatise reached a widespread diffusion and success in the universities, thanks to its clear exposition of Aristotle's doctrine. A special attention is devoted to those Renaissance philosophers and professors who quoted Contarini in order to defend Aristotle's natural philosophy against the new theories of Telesio and Campanella.

Key Words

Manuscripts, Natural Philosophy, Gasparo Contarini, elements, Aristotelianism.



I. Introduction

For most of the last seventy years, the historical research devoted a careful investigation only to two aspects of Contarini's thought: his treatise *De immortalitate animae*, due to the controversy with his master Pietro Pomponazzi,

* I would like to thank my professors, Nicola Panichi and Vittoria Perrone Compagni, who strongly supported this research; and Andrea A. Robiglio, who discussed the article in his class of Renaissance philosophy. A special thank goes also to Marco Bernardi, Martina Dal Cengio, Andrea Lazzarini and Carlo Ziano, whose philological wisdom was for me of great utility; to Vittoria Brunetti, who hosted me in Rome during my inquiry in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana; and to Lorenzo Mesini, for his correspondence from the British Library. Finally, I owe this work to prof. Franco Bacchelli, who never refused his help during the collection of all the witnesses and guided me with his immense knowledge of European libraries.

and his *De magistratibus et republica venetorum*, due to the birth of Venetian myth.¹ In this general background, Carlo Giacon offered a unique contribution in 1960, with an article concerning Contarini's treatise of metaphysics and its peculiar interpretation of the Aristotelianism based on Avicenna.² However, Giacon didn't open a new path of inquiry; since then, there have been no studies on Contarini's philosophical thought until the very last decades³ and even the most recent

¹ About the dispute *de immortalitate animae* see LUCA BURZELLI, « Aspetti della tradizione aristotelica nel *De immortalitate animae*: Gasparo Contarini lettore di Avicenna », *Rinascimento*, 2nd ser., 59 (2019), p. 365–390; GIOVANNI DI NAPOLI, *L'immortalità dell'anima nel Rinascimento*, Società Editrice internazionale, Torino 1963; ÉTIENNE GILSON, « Autour de Pomponazzi: problématique de l'immortalité de l'âme en Italie au début du XVI^e siècle », *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 28 (1961), p. 163–279; MARTIN PINE, *Pietro Pomponazzi: Radical Philosopher of the Renaissance*, Antenore, Padova 1986 (Saggi e testi, 21); VITTORIA PERRONE COMPAGNI, « L'Apologia: bilanci, anticipazioni, polemiche », in PIETRO POMPONAZZI, *Apologia*, ed. VITTORIA PERRONE COMPAGNI, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze 2011 (Immagini della Ragione, 14); EAD., « Introduzione », in PIETRO POMPONAZZI, *Trattato sull'immortalità dell'anima*, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze 1999 (Immagini della Ragione, 1). The bibliography concerning *De magistratibus* is very wide. See at least the recent work of MARIA STELLA FLORIO, « So Flourishing a Commonwealth. Some Aspects of Lewkenor's Translation of Contarini's *La Republica e i magistrati di Vinegia* (1544) », Ph.D. Diss. University of Venice 2008/9 (tutor prof. VALERIO DE SCARPIS); WILLIAM J. BOUWSMA, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty. Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation*, University of California Press, Berkeley – Los Angeles 1969, p. 144–153; FELIX GILBERT, « Religion and Politics in the Thought of Gasparo Contarini », in THEODORE K. RABB, JERROLD E. SEIGEL (eds.), *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe. Essays in Memory of E. H. Harbison*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1969, p. 90–116; HERMANN HACKERT, *Die Staatschrift Contarinis und die Politischen Verhältnisse Venedigs im 16. Jahrhundert*, C. Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, Heidelberg 1940 (Heidelberger Abhandlungen zur mittleren und neueren Geschichte, 69); FRANCO GAETA, « Alcune consideraz. sul mito di Venezia », in *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 23 (1961), p. 58–75; JOHN G. A. POCKOCK, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, Princeton University Press, Princeton – London 1975; STEFANO SIMONETTA, « 'Evere man for the most parte ys lyke to them wyth whome he ys conversant'. Thomas Starkey, Gasparo Contarini e Venezia », in LUCA BIANCHI, ONORATO GRASSI, CECILIA PANTI (eds.), *Edizioni, traduzioni e tradizioni filosofiche. Studi per Pietro B. Rossi*, Aracne, Roma 2018 (*Flumen sapientiae*, 7), p. 515–531.

² CARLO GIACON, « L'aristotelismo avicennistico di Gasparo Contarini », in *Aristotelismo padovano e filosofia aristotelica*, *Atti del XII Convegno internazionale di filosofia*, Sansoni, Firenze 1960, p. 109–119. A critical inquiry on this article can be found in ANDREA ROBIGLIO, « Una nota su Gasparo Contarini e il problema del male », in BIANCHI, GRASSI, PANTI (eds.), *Edizioni, traduzioni e tradizioni filosofiche*, p. 502–513, esp. p. 507; ELIZABETH GLEASON, *Gasparo Contarini: Venice, Rome, and Reform*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1993, p. 76.

³ New studies have been recently offered by ENRICO PERUZZI, « Gli allievi di Pomponazzi: Girolamo Fracastoro e Gasparo Contarini », in MARCO SGARBI (ed.), *Pietro Pomponazzi. Tradizione e dissenso. Atti del Congresso internazionale di studi su Pietro Pomponazzi. Mantova, 23–24 ottobre 2008*, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze 2010 (*Biblioteca Mantovana*, 9), p. 349–364; ID., « Natura e destino dell'anima umana: le critiche di Gasparo Contarini al *De immortalitate animae* di Pietro Pomponazzi », in FERDINANDO LUIGI MARCOLUNGO (ed.), *Fenomeno, trascendenza, verità. Scritti in onore di Gianfranco Bosio*, Il Poligrafo, Padova 2012, p. 169–183. PIETRO BASSIANO ROSSI, « 'Sempre alla pietà et buoni costumi ha exortato le genti': Aristotle in the milieu of Cardinal Contarini († 1542) », in LUCA BIANCHI (ed.), *Christian Readings of Aristotle from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, Brepols, Turnhout 2011

essays on Contarini cannot cover entirely this huge field of research. Therefore, some remarkable works and aspects of his production, like the treatises concerning his theology (*Scholia in epistolas divi Pauli*, *Instructio christiana*, *De sacramentis christianae legis*) are still almost unknown.⁴

A similar fate befell the treatise *De elementis*, whose five books were composed around the end of the Twenties and the beginning of the Thirties, as an ideal prosecution with *Compendium primae philosophiae* (1527): the former adds an exposition of the sublunar world and its elementary constitution to the latter which deals with the emanation from the first cause and ends with the rise of the human mind.⁵ The purpose of this article is to fill the gap in the bibliography about Contarini's *De elementis* and hopefully facilitate a future critical edition of the treatise.⁶ Therefore, this research will explore first the material transmission of the text, and second its success among other authors of the sixteenth century. Since we don't aim to provide now a critical edition but just some advises concerning the relations between witnesses, we decided to reduce the list of

(*Studia Artistarum*, 29), p. 317–395; Id., « *Vita activa/vita contemplativa*: l'ideale etico e civile di Gasparo Contarini († 1542), patrizio veneziano e cardinale », in ALEXANDER FIDORA, ANDREAS NIEDERBERGER, MERIO SCATTOLA (eds.), *Phronêsis – Prudentia – Klugheit*, Brepols, Turnhout 2013 (Textes et Etudes du Moyen Âge, 68), p. 203–226; ROBIGLIO, « Una nota su Gasparo Contarini e il problema del male »; ELIZABETH BLUM, « Gasparo Contarini's double access to the one truth, as seen in his letter on predestination », *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, 64/1 (2017), p. 82–87; ELIZABETH BLUM, PAUL R. BLUM, « Gasparo Contarini philosopher », in BIANCHI, GRASSI, PANTI (eds.), *Edizioni, traduzioni e tradizioni filosofiche*, p. 487–500; BARBARA BARTOCCI, « Plato's Parmenides as Serious Game: Contarini and the Renaissance Reception of Proclus », in DRAGOS CALMA (ed.), *Reading Proclus and the Book of Causes*, vol. I: *Western Scholarly Networks and Debates*, Brill, Leiden 2019 (Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition, 22), p. 466–479. For an up-to-date bibliography of philosophical studies on Contarini, see LUCA BURZELLI, « Contarini Gasparo », *Encyclopedia of Renaissance Philosophy*, (2020) *ad indicem*.

⁴ An important exception in this general lack of theological studies is the *De officio episcopi* (1516), which was analyzed by GIGLIOLA FRAGNITO, « Cultura umanistica e riforma religiosa: il *De officio episcopi* », *Studi Veneziani*, 11 (1969), p. 75–189 (repr. in EAD., *Gasparo Contarini. Un magistrato veneziano al servizio della Cristianità*, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze 1988 [Biblioteca della « Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa ». Testi e Documenti, 9], p. 79–206).

⁵ It seems interesting to underline Contarini's conviction that a good scholar of Metaphysics must have been also educated to natural philosophy (*Compendium primae philosophiae*, VI, in GASPARIS CONTARENI *Opera*, apud Nivellium, Parisiis 1571, p. 159 B: « Idoneus primae philosophiae auditor is iure existimari debet qui naturali scientiae non tantum operam dederit, verum etiam in ea excelluerit: innata nanque nobis via doctrinae est a notioribus nobis. Huiusmodi autem sunt sensibilia entia: omnis enim nostra cognitio ortum habet a sensu. Repetamus ergo a Physicis indeque id quod superest ordiamur »). In addition, many topics of the last book of *Compendium* are present along the exposition of *De elementis*.

⁶ The only analysis of this edition in vulgar and its success can be found in LYNN THORNDIKE, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. V, Columbia University Press, New York 1941, p. 555–556, quoted even by GLEASON, *Gasparo Contarini*, p. 87.

variants selecting the most significant cases, while leaving aside the cases of typically polygenetic mistakes.

II. *Recensio*

The treatise *De elementis* has been transmitted by twelve witnesses, of which seven are manuscripts and five are printed editions. There is also an additional printed edition, which is anonymous and mutilated of the books III–V. Our *recensio* will give specific information about each of the first twelve witnesses, but it will also devote some attention to the last one.⁷

Manuscripts

L. London, British Library, ADD. MS. 10707⁸

Sixteenth century. Paper, bound by scroll, 155 × 210 mm, 178 folia. It contains only Contarini's treatise, under the name « *De elementis simplicibus et compositis libri V* ». The folia are numbered with Arabic numbers, in a modern handwriting, from 1 to 88, added with pencil in a second time. The computation of quires is made by quoting the first words of the following file. The watermark represents a flower or a star between two letters, B/P and R. Even though it was difficult to recognize it, it seems possible to say that this watermark looks like Briquet's nn. 9674–5, dated in Verona around 1550 (but this dating is too late for the treatise). The text was written by one hand, except for fol. 5r–v which seems to be added to the rest in a second time and written by a second hand. This hypothesis is confirmed by the text of fol. 5: the *recto* was left with no words, while the *verso* contains a second version which appears in parallel with the ordinary text. It is important to underline that the correspondent variant of fol. 6r–v is quashed (by underlining) – more information about these two drafts of the text will be given later (see *infra*, p. 317). Thus, two alternatives seem possible: in one case, the copyist might have read two different redactions of the treatise and decided to put them together, due to the difficulty to choose the one or the other; in the other case, the copyist copied the first text and then, after discovering (or

⁷ It might be useful to observe preliminarily that, due to the linguistic and syntactic features of the text, the edition of Manuzio (1557) cannot be considered for the constitution of the critical text. It is translated in Italian vernacular and every single proposition is cut and reordered in a new disposition. Therefore, this edition seems irrelevant for the reconstruction of the relationships between witnesses, even if very interesting for the evolution and transmission of the text.

⁸ See *Addition to the manuscripts in the British museum in 1836–40*, George Woodfall and Sons, London 1843, vol. II, p. 9.

composing) the new draft, he deleted the previous one and added the new paragraph.

M. Bologna, Archivio di Stato, Fondo Malvezzi-Campeggi, serie IV 55/715

Sixteenth century. Paper, 240 × 180 mm, [4], 86, [10] folia. It contains only Contarini's treatise, but without any reference to the name of the author or to the original title. There is no numeration of the folia, nor a computation of the single books and files. The text was written by one hand. The watermark represents two crossing arrows with a star above; Briquet dates it in Florence between 1521 and 1528 (nn. 6295–6). The manuscript might have belonged to Giovanni Battista Campeggi (1507–83), bishop of Maiorca and son of the famous cardinal Lorenzo Campeggi.⁹

O. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS. Latin 6555¹⁰

Sixteenth century. Paper, 215 × 285 mm, [10], 123 folia. It contains only Contarini's *De elementis* (fol. 1r–123r). At the beginning of the manuscript, ten pages were ripped out, as it is evident from the flaps of paper imbedded in the binding. The pages are numerated by Roman numbers, starting from the first page of *De elementis*. The computation of files (all quaternions, except for the last one) is made by Latin letters ([A]–[R]). The watermark represents the letter A, surrounded by a circle; it seems to correspond to Briquet's n. 7931, dated in Tuscany around 1502. The text was written by one hand. The manuscript belonged to the Florentine nobleman Alberto del Bene, whose name appears on the first page [*Alberti Benij*].¹¹

P. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS. Latin 6738¹²

1539 ca. Paper, 145 × 205 mm, [4], 139, [9] folia, numbered with Arabic numbers (from 1 to 277). There is no computation of quires. The manuscript contains

⁹ For Giovanni Battista Campeggi see ADRIANO PROSPERI, « Campeggi Giovanni Battista », *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 17 (1974), *ad indicem*.

¹⁰ This manuscript was mentioned by CHARLES LOHR, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries*, vol. II: *Renaissance Authors*, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze 1988, p. 102.

¹¹ Little information concerning Alberto Del Bene comes from a letter of Pietro Bembo (see *Delle lettere di Messer Pietro Bembo*, presso Piero Antonio Berno, Verona 1743, vol. III, p. 336, letter dated in Rome on June 27th, 1542, to Del Bene in Padua). Another mention can be found in a letter of Annibal Caro, dated in Rome on March 10th, 1538, to Benedetto Varchi in Padua (see *Delle lettere familiari del commendatore Annibal Caro*, presso i fratelli Masi, Bologna 1820, vol. V, p. 117). Even in this case we know that Del Bene belonged to the entourage of Pietro Bembo.

¹² This manuscript was mentioned by LOHR, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries*, vol. II, p. 102. I apologize for not controlling its watermark. However, the text can be exactly dated in Rome in 1539.

Contarini's *De elementis* (p. 1–257) and an anonymous dialogue, titled *De fortitudine* (p. 159–277). The treatise *De elementis* presents many annotations in the margin. The manuscript probably belonged to the bibliophile Jean-Baptiste Hautin (1580–1640), as it appears from a sign on the lining [J. B. Hautin].¹³ The treatise *De elementis* was copied in Rome in 1539, as it ends on p. 277 with the date: « 1539 | Romae ».

Q. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS. Latin 6557

Ante 1539. Paper, 185 × 260 mm, [3], 197, [2] folia, numbered with Arabic numbers (from 1 to 197). It contains only Contarini's *De elementis*, but it doesn't mention the name of the philosopher. There are two watermarks. The first one represents a lamb holding a flag, surrounded by two circles; Briquet dates it in Rome between 1535 and 1543 (n. 59). The second one represents a shield containing a bird, surmounted by a star; Briquet dates it in Rome between 1534 and 1546 (n. 12235). Both these watermarks can be recognized in other papers of Contarini: n. 59 can be found in Contarini's autograph draft of *De poenitentia* (Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, *Archivium Arcis, Arm. n. I–XVIII*, MS. 6461, fol. 132r–144v); n. 12235 can be found in Aleandro's copy of Contarini's *De potestate pontificis in usu clavium* (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 3918) and in the Vatican copy of *De elementis* (here, witness **R**). The text was written by one hand. Due to the analysis of variants, it seems possible to date this manuscript before 1539; however, close to the first draft of *De elementis*, since other manuscripts copied in 1539 already contain a second and definitive draft of the text.

R. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS. Vat. lat. 3165¹⁴

Sixteenth century. Paper, 140 × 205 mm, 138 folia. The numeration is made by printer numbers down on the right. The first and the last folia are not numbered. Folio 94 was repeated with the number 94a added in pencil. The computation of quires was made with Arabic numbers. The watermark represents a shield containing a bird, surmounted by a star with six points. Briquet dates it in Rome between 1534 and 1546 (n. 12235). The same watermark can be recognized in MS. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 3918, containing Contarini's *De potestate pontificis in usu clavium* and owed by card. Girolamo Aleandro. The manuscript

¹³ For more information about Jean-Baptiste Hautin see JEAN-CHRÉTIEN-FERDINAND HOEFER, *Nouvelle Biographie Général*, Firmin Didot, Paris 1858, vol. XXIII, col. 557; EDMOND BONNAFFÉ, *Dictionnaire des amateurs français au XVII^e siècle*, Israël, Amsterdam 1884, p. 135–136; KEITH BUSBY, TERRY NIXON, ALISON STONES, LORI J. WALTERS (eds.), *Les Manuscrits de Chrétien de Troyes*, Rodopi, Amsterdam – Atlanta 1993, vol. I, p. 135.

¹⁴ This manuscript was mentioned by LOHR, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries*, vol. II, p. 102.

contains only Contarini's *De elementis*; the name of the author is written at the beginning of fol. 1r, in a different handwriting. The text was written by one hand.

S. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale 'Vittorio Emanuele III', Fondo Principale, MS. VIII F 30¹⁵

Sixteenth century. Paper, 145 × 210 mm, [1], 154, [1] folia. The fol. 1–25 present Arabic numeration by a hand of the sixteenth century; the following folia until fol. 100 were numbered by a second and modern hand with pencil, up on the right; the rest (fol. 101–149) presents modern Arabic numeration by pencil down on the right. It contains two guard sheets and 15 quires, generally quinterns, except for the first (ternion), the seventh (seven sheets) and the fifteenth (six sheets). The watermark represents a lamb holding a shield; Briquet dates it in Naples between 1528 and 1536 (n. 1131). The manuscript contains Contarini's *Compendium primae philosophiae* (fol. 6r–68v) and his *De elementis* (fol. 70r–149r). The fol. 69 and 150–154 are white. The two treatises were written by different hands. The first one was copied in Naples, in the convent of San Giovanni a Carbonara (at the time, lead by Girolamo Seripando) at the beginning of September 1537. It seems possible that also the second treatise comes from the same convent, in a close date. The *Compendium* seems far more complete, showing name of the author, title and division of books; in addition, it contains plenty of glosses. On the contrary, *De elementis* lacks all that information and presents no glosses. The witness is also mentioned by the ancient catalogue of the books which were owned by San Giovanni a Carbonara before 1570: the catalogue describes it unitedly, as « compendium primae et naturalis philosophiae, formapulo enchyridii maiore ». ¹⁶

Printed editions

D. Lutetiae Parisiorum, apud Nicolaum Divitem 1548

Fol. [i]r: GASPARIS CONTARENI CAR-| DINALIS. AMPLISS. PHILOSOPHI SVA | aetate praestantissimi de Elementis et eorum mixtioni-| bus libri quinque, cum indice copiosiss. nunc primum | in lucem aediti. | Scipionis Capitij de principijs rerum poema. | In geminam anchoram. | Fundabat satis Aonias anchora puppes, | Dum tantum Ausoniis mus nataret aquis. | Nunc quam Palladiae sulcant maria omnia naues, | Visa quod una parum est

¹⁵ This manuscript was mentioned by LOHR, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries*, vol. II, p. 102.

¹⁶ DAVID GUTIÉRREZ, *La biblioteca di San Giovanni a Carbonara di Napoli*, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, Roma 1966, p. 137. I am grateful to Maria Gabriella Mansi, director of the manuscript department of Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli, and to Andrea Improta, for introducing me to the material features and the catalogues of the books owned by San Giovanni a Carbonara.

anchora facta duplex. | *Lutetiae Parisiorum per Nicolaum Diuitem, uia sa-* | *cerdotum, ad diuae Genouefes, sub insigni ge-* | *minae ancorae.* | CVM PRIVILEGIO REGIS. | 1548. ||

Between *poema.* and *In geminam* there is an engraving, surrounded by the writing: NON SATIS VNA TE. | NET CERATAS | ANCHORA PUPPES.

Fol. [i]v: royal privilege of printing.

Foll. iir–viiiiv: INDEX RERVM INSIGNIO- | *rum in quattuor libros de elementis.*

Fol. A[i]r–v: Dedication of Johannes Gaignaeus, cancellarius parisiensis, to cardinal Marcello Cervini.¹⁷

Fol. Aiiir–v: *errata corrige.*

Fol. Aiiir: DE ELEMENTIS EORUM'- | *que mixtionibus, Authore Gaspa-* | *re Contareno Cardinale do-* | *ctiss. Liber I.* |

Incipit: nE mo est hominum, Matthaee Dandule, in- | genij adeo tardi, aut stupidi, qui non singu- | larem quandam voluptatem capiat ex re- | rum naturae contemplatione...

Explicit, fol. 89v: quorum praestan- | tissimum iure existimari debet philo- | sophia quae nos efficit | propre diui- | nos. | FINIS. | Deo optimo maximo laus inexplicabilis. ||

In-8°, VIII–119 fol. The edition is composed by 16 files, each of which is a quaternion. The files are computed with Roman capital letter [A–P] and numbers [i–iiiij], except for the first file, which presents only Roman numbers [i–iiiij].

W. Parisiis, apud Andrea Wechelum 1564

Fol. [a]r: GASPARIS | CONTARENI CAR- | DINALIS AMPLISS. | philosophi sua aetate praestan- | tissimi de Elementis & eorum | mixtionibus libri quinque. | Diligentiss. Denuo recogniti & emendati. | *Scipionis Capitij de principiis | rerum poema.* | Cum Indice rerum copiosissimo. | PARISIIS, | Apud Andream Wechelum. | 1564.

Between *copiosissimo.* and *Parisiis* there is an engraving.

Fol. [a]v: white.

¹⁷ Jean de Gagny was rector and Chancellor of the University of Paris from 1546 until 1549, when he died. For more information, see JEAN-CHRÉTIEN-FERDINAND HOFER, *Nouvelle Biographie générale*, Firmin Didot, Paris 1858, vol. XIX, col. 165–6, s.v. 'Gagny ou Gagnee, ou Gueni (Jean de)'; JOHANN HEINRICH ZEDLER, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, Paris 1913, vol. LVI, col. 497–500, s.v. 'Gagny (Jean de)'. For an interesting historical analysis of this edition and its political consequences see PAOLO SACHET, *Publishing for the Popes. The Roman Curia and the Use of Printing (1527–1555)*, Brill, Leiden – Boston 2020 (Library of the Written Word, 80), p. 187–188.

Fol. 2: DE ELEMENTIS EO- | RVMQUE MIXTIONI- | bus, Authore Gaspare Contareno | Cardinale doctiss. Lib. I.

Incipit: NEMO est hominum, Matthaee | Dandule, ingenij adeò tardi, aut | stupidi, qui non singularem quan- | dam voluptatem capiat ex rerum | naturae contemplatione...

Explicit, fol. 99v: quorum prestantissi- | mum iure existimari debet philosophia quae nos efficit propre diuinos. | FINIS. | Deo optimo maximo laus inexplicabilis. ||

Fol. Rir-Rviiv: INDEX RERVVM INSI- | GNIVRM IN QVA- | tuor libros de ele- | mentis. ||

In-8°, 128 fol. Folia are numerated with Arabic numbers; files are quaternions computed with Latin capital letters [A-R] and Arabic numbers [i-iiij].

N. Parisiis, apud Sebastianum Nivellium 1571

Fol. [a]r: GASPARIS | CONTARENI | CARDINALIS | OPERA. | PARISIIS. | Apud Sebastianum Niuellium, sub Ciconiis in via Jacobaea. | 1571 | CVM PRIVILEGIO REGIS. |

Between OPERA. and PARISIIS there is an engraving.

Fol. [a]v: white.

Fol. a iir: dedication of Alvise Contarini to cardinal Alessandro Farnese.

Fol. a iiv: summary of the works published in the volume. Then, academic approvals: the first dated 1 December 1570, was signed by «HVGONIS. AYMONIS.»; the second, dated 11 February 1570, was signed by «DAH. Y. HVGONIS.». Both the approvals certificate that in Contarini's works regarding Lutherans there is nothing misleading from Catholic doctrine.

Fol. a iiijr: royal privilege of printing, dated 17 March 1571.

Fol. a iiijv: white.

Fol. br-d iiijr: GASPARIS CONTARENI | VITA | A IOANNE CASA CONSCRIPTA. |

Fol. [d iiij]v: white.

Files are computed with letters (A-Z; Za-Zz; AA-II). Every page is numbered, from p. 1 to p. 627. Each page is internally divided into sections, computed with capital letters (A-D on the *recto*; E-H on the *verso*). The edition concludes with:

Fol. [GG iiij]v-[II ii]r: RERVVM AC VERBORVM, | QVAE HOC VOLVMINE CONTI | NENTVR, INDEX COPIOSISSIMVS. |

Fol. II iiijv: *erratacorrige*.

Fol. II iiijr: conclusion of *erratacorrige*; *index quaternionum*.

Fol. II iiijv: white.

The format is *in folio*, 20 + 627 + 11 pages, 59 ternions e 4 duerns.

The treatise *De elementis* occupies p. 1–90. The text is preceded by a frieze with an Aries: DE ELEMENTIS. | LIBER PRIMVS.

Incipit: NEMO est hominum, Matthaeae Dandule, ingenij à-deo tardi, ac fere stupidi, qui non singularem quan-dam voluptatem capiat ex rerum naturae contemplatio-ne...

Explicit: quorum praestan-tissimum iure existimari debet philoso-phia, quae nos efficit propè | diuinos. | GASPARIS | FINIS. ||

E1. Venetiis, apud Aldum 1578

The first Venetian edition of 1578 (Gasparis Contareni *Opera*, Venetiis, apud Aldum, 1578) reprints the French edition Nivelles 1571 for text, lay out, number of pages, computation of files. It adds only a new censor-review which deletes some propositions.¹⁸

E2. Venetiis, apud Damianum Zenarium 1589

Also the printed edition of 1589 (Gasparis Contareni *Opera omnia*, Venetiis, apud Damianum Zenarium, 1589) reprints the French edition Nivelles 1571 for the entire text, to which it adds a new censure (see *infra*, n. 18).

III. Transmission of the text

It was still not possible to complete a full collation of the entire text, which only would give a truthful and concrete image of the relationships between witnesses. Nevertheless, in this analysis we propose the full collation of a significative part of it: namely, the first book, which means 20 % of the entire treatise. The importance of this part is due to the quality of variants, as it will be shown. This work, even though not complete, can give some clear information about the transmission of the text.

¹⁸ For a more detailed reconstruction of these editions and their censure see CLAUS ARNOLD, *Die römische Zensur der Werke Cajetans und Contarinis (1558–1601): Grenzen der theologischen Konfessionalisierung*, Schöningh, Paderborn 2008 (Römische Inquisition und Indexkongregation, 10), p. 171–332; GASPARO CONTARINI, *Gegenreformatorische Schriften*, ed. FRIEDRICH HÜNERMANN, Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, Aschendorff 1923 (Corpus Catholicorum. Werke katholischer Schriftsteller im Zeitalter der Glaubens Spaltung, 7), p. xxxii–xxxvii.

III.1. Different drafts

The first aspect with which a future critical edition of *De elementis* will have to deal is the presence of a double redaction, at least for the first book. A first draft of book 1 (mss. **L**, **Q**) explains the Platonic theory of triangles in an easy and fast way, concluding soon with the identification of geometrical solids and elements:

Haec Plato in Timaeo obscure admodum complexus est, seu potius innuit. Inquit enim proportionem maioris lateris ad minus triplam esse; ac paulo infra, proportionem maioris ad minus secundum potentiam esse duplam. Subticuit autem proportionem sesquilateram, quae est maximi laterum ad medium. Verum tum ex his quae diximus, tum etiam certissima ratione compertum esse potest, si ad latus minimum latera duo quae restant, eas proportionem habeant ut alterum triplum sit, alterum duplum, necessario sequi quod proportio lateris habentis triplam, ad latus quod duplam habet ad minimum proportionem, erit proportio sesquialtera.¹⁹

This first version was soon modified by the author, who composed a second draft that appears in the rest of the manuscript tradition (**O**, **R**, **S** and **M**). In the British manuscript **L**, for example, the piece of argumentation corresponding to draft 1, was underlined. Then, in a jointed page (fol. 5v) a new hand transcribed the new draft, which is coherent with the second branch of the manuscript tradition:

Hanc rationem, ut arbitror, Plato in Timaeo innuit, quamvis ipsam subticuerit maiorisque negotii esse dixerit, quam ut ibi explicari potuerit; cui scilicet Deus elegerit illud scaleni genus quod postea diuersa quadam ratione exponit. Inquit enim in eo scaleno unum latus esse in potentia triplum ad minus. Et aliquanto infra inquit, in eo hypotenusam esse longitudine duplam ad minorem lineam. Hoc autem est in eo scaleni genere, cuius meminimus, in quo ordine quaedam est proportio trium, duorum et unius. Nam hypotenusa est verbigratia sex cubitorum, minima linea trium erit, ut ostendam. Quadratum hypotenusae erit triginta sex; minoris vero lineae quadratum erit novem, quae si demantur a triginta sex, relinquuntur viginti septem (quod erit quadratum tertiae lineae, quae simul cum minori continet angulum rectum). Viginti septem vero sunt tripla ad novem. Hoc patet, quoniam in triangulo rectangulo quadratum hypotenusae est aequale duobus quadratis simul sumptis duarum linearum continentium angulum rectum. Quod autem hypotenusa sit dupla longitudine minoris lineae ostenditur: nam si illi scaleno circumscribatur circulus, utique hypotenusa erit diameter, centum inquam et viginti graduum, minor linea (quae est chorda sexaginta graduum) est latus hexagoni descripti in eodem circulo. Erit igitur semidiameter sexaginta scilicet

¹⁹ See **D**, f. [Avii]v; **L**, fol. 6r–v; **Q**, fol. 5r–v. On the Platonic theory of triangles see PLATO, *Timaeus*, 56b and 63c–d; CALCIDIUS, *Commentarium in Timaeum*, § 39.

graduum, ut ostensum est in Geometria. Erit igitur hypotenusa dupla longitudine minoris lineae.²⁰

It is evident that in the second draft Contarini expanded the geometrical exposition, in order to make the argument more precise. With regards to **Q**, we might be allowed to conclude that it contains draft 1 without corrections, because it was copied and circulated before the composition of draft 2. It is finally interesting to see that also the first printed edition **D** contains the draft 1: this might prove its dependence from an *interpositus* manuscript with the first draft of *De elementis*. Edition **W** is dependent on **D**. Something very different happened with the edition **N**, in 1571. The analysis of variants permits us to conjecture that the editor of **N** was taking into accounts both the editions **D-W** and a manuscript with draft 2: however, it descends from the second branch.

III.2. Group L–M

The collation of the first book of **L** and **M** permits to conclude that they form a unitary group, since they contain separative variants which divide them from the rest of the manuscript tradition. In this list we find *saut du même au même*, inversions of words or mistakes of haplography in the Latin words, due to little attention of the copyist. It is not possible to exclude even a revision of the text, since the *lectiones* are often deeply different from draft 1 to draft 2:

P.²¹ **1B.** ex] O, P, Q, R, S; in L, M; quam] O, P, Q, R, S; quod L, M. **1C.** in conscribenda] O, P, Q, R, S; introscribenda L, M. **2E.** adveniam] O, P, Q, R, S; deveniam L, M. notitiam] P, Q, R, S; rationem O; notionem L, M. **2F.** verborum] O, P, Q, R, S; versorum L, M. **2G.** quo] O, P, Q, R, S; hoc L, M. remanet post] O, P, Q, R, S; remaneret potest post L, M. **2H.** orationis... pronuntiatur] O, P, Q, R, S; orations, quae voces pronunciantur L, M. **3A.** Dictiones... resolvuntur] O, P, Q, R, S; *omm.* L, M. **3C.** esse] O, P, Q, R, S; etiam L, M. **4F.** pares] O, P, Q, R, S; partes L, M; **4G.** certa] O, P, Q, R, S; extra L, M. **5A.** Dupla... oppositorum] O, P, Q, R, S; *omm.* L, M. **5D.** efficietur] O, P, Q, R, S; efficiatur L, M. **6H.** cummentitium] O, P, Q, R, S; cummentionem L, M. **8G.** recedit] O, P, Q, R, S; excedit L, M. **9B.** permeat] O, P, Q, R, S; promeat L, M. **9C.** mentibus] O, P, Q, R, S; mixtionibus L, M. **10F.** quampiam] O, P, Q, R, S; quipiam L, M. **10H.** ex se] O, P, Q, R, S; *omm.* L, M. **11B.** a] O, P, Q, R, S; *omm.* L, M. **11C.** at] O, P, Q, R, S; ut L, M. rationale] S; ratione O, P, Q, R; omne L, M. **11D.** proximum] O, P, Q, R, S; *omm.* L, M. **12F.** gerunt] O, P, Q, R, S; ferunt L, M. **12G.** inesse] O, P, Q, R, S; esse L, M. **12H.** subtilitatis] O, P, Q, R, S;

²⁰ GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 5 A–C. I have emended the text according to the analysis of variants, of which I give here some indications: l. **12.** cum] D, N, L, M; in S; tamen O, R; ^{cum}tamen P. **13.** patet] D, N, P, R, S, L, M; pacto O. **16.** illi] *om.* D, N; *add.* L, M, O, P, R, S. **18.** viginti] L, M, O, P, R, S; triginta D, N. **21.** minoris] N, O, P, R, S; minus L, M; *om.* D.

²¹ The page number refers to the printed edition of Paris, 1571. The following capital letters refer to the *recensio* of manuscripts and editions, already described.

substantialitatis L, M. **13D.** dat] O, P, Q, R, S; datur L, M. **14F.** sistat] O, P, Q, R, S; distat L, M. **15A.** quondam] O, P, Q, R; quempiam S, L, M. **15B.** eorum] O, P, Q, R, S; *omm.* L, M. vero] O, P, Q, R, S; mixto L, M. **15C.** diffitemur] O, P, Q, R, S; differemur L, M. Item] O, P, Q, R, S; tera L, M. **16E.** adscribunt] O, P, Q, R, S; attribuunt L, M. **18E.** vinculo et nodo] O, P, R, S; circulo et modo L, M; vinculo et modo Q. **19D.** si quis] O, P, Q, R, S; sibi L, M. **20E.** utrumque] O, P, Q, R, S; utrique L, M. indeque] O, P, Q, R, S; idemque L, M. **20G.** nixum] O, P, Q, R, S; mixtum L, M. **20H.** portio] O, P, Q, R, S; proportionibus L, M.

The second question concerning group **L–M** has to do with their order. The analysis of variants permits to say that **M** is a *codex descriptus* of **L**, since it contains some new mistakes that **L** does not contain. In some cases, it is even possible to prove the misinterpretation of the text **L** by the copyist of **M**:

P. 11D. urgent] L, O, P, Q, R, S; vegent M. **12C.** ei] L, O, P, Q, R, S; si M. **14G.** maior] M, D, N; et maior S; etiam maior L, O, P, R; enim maior Q. **15B.** vis] *omm.* L, O, P, Q, R, S; *ad.* M. **16G.** tueantur] L, O, P, Q, R, S; sueantur M. **20F.** mundi] L, O, P, Q, R, S; *om.* M.

In cases 11D and 16G, **M** misinterpreted **L**, since in both instances the reading of **L** is not very clear. In case 15B, **M** copied *vis* from the upper line of the page. While variants in 14F could be easily emended, there is no doubt that the omission in 14G and 20F must determine the dependence of **M** on **L**.

III.3. Group O–P–R–S

This large group of manuscripts can be isolated, since it contains the draft 2 of the first book. In addition, the analysis of joining variants permits to prove that they all depend from the same branch of the tradition. Anyway, it seems impossible to make any of these manuscripts depend from another, since each of them presents some significative splitting variants from the others.

The case of **O**: p. **5B.** patet] D, N, P, R, S, L, M; pacto O. **10E.** hic] his L, M, P, Q, R, S; illis O.

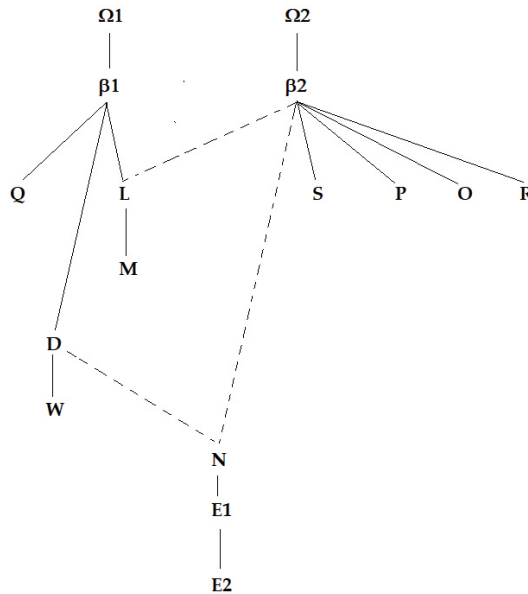
The case of **P**: p. **5B.** cum] D, N, L, M; in S; tamen O, R; ^{cum}tamen P. **7C.** neque forma...habet] D, N, O, Q, R, S, L, M; *om.* P. **14H.** posset] D, N, O, Q, R, S, L, M; potest P. **15C.** demas] D, N, O, Q, R, S, L, M; demat P.

The case of **R**: p. **3C.** vocare] D, N, O, P, Q, S, L, M; appellare R. **5D.** inquam] D, N, R, L, M; inquit O, P, Q, S. **10G.** movetur] D, N, O, P, Q, S, L, M; movetve R. **20H.** ipsi] D, N, O, P, Q, S, L, M; sibi R.

The case of **S**: p. **1B.** fecisse] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; ferisse S. **2G.** prima] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; *om.* S. **3A.** tractatio] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; oratio S. **3C.** hisce] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; his S. **3D.** de caelo] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; de caelo et mundo S. **7A.** a] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; de S. **8F.** proprietates] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; proprie S. **9A.** evenire] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; *om.* S. *attente*] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; *om.* S. **9B.** naturalis motus] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; naturalis corpus S. **10E.** illi] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; *om.* S. **10G.** nullique] D, N, O, P,

Q, R, L, M; nulleque S. potius] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; scilicet S. **11A.** illud... motus] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; om. S. **11B.** efficiens] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; sufficiens S. **11D.** cuius nixu] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; nisu S. **12F.** quidam] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; om. S. conantur] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; conantes S. **12D.** quo] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; scilicet quo S. **14E.** adversario] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; adverso S. **14F.** in motu] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; in momento S. **14H.** ullo] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; alio S. **16F.** ferri] N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; fieri D; fit S. **16G.** passum] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; om. S. **17A.** inferiorem] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; inferioris S. impetum] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; impetus S. **17B.** velocior] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; velocius S. quoque] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; om. S. **17C.** quam] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; aquam S. **17D.** quotnam sint] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; quondam sunt S. primo rerum] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; summo S. **18E.** vero illud] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; autem S. refert] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; refertur S. **19C.** simplices] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; simplici S. **19D.** essent] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; esset S. accomodari] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; om. S. **20H.** expansa] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; extensa S.

Note to the text: for the *recensio* and the article I have always quoted from the Parisian edition of 1571 (**N**), which was officially cured by the family and is the most reliable witness. I have emended the text only in its graphical layout: abbreviations were dissolved and letters -u- and -v-, as much as punctuation and capital letters, were restored according to modern use.



IV. Success of the treatise

In his *History of Magic* Lynn Thorndike listed some of the main reasons of the first success of Contarini's *De elementis*: the treatise seems « a very clear and readable work », and in many cases it deals with its topics with « no little acumen ». ²² Indeed, Contarini chooses a successful rhetoric style for his work, in order to facilitate the understanding of physical issues. He provides the arguments in a clear and consistent structure, writing in an easy style without any syntactical or lexical tangle. ²³ The argumentation seems fluid and organic, which is something completely different from the structure of the medieval *quaestio*: as a matter of fact, Contarini doesn't want to complicate it by quoting always *pro* and *contra*, but he rather prefers to choose an interpretative path for his reader. ²⁴

Every time he must face a controversial question (for example, the permanence of elements' shape in the mixture), he lists the diverging positions, and he adds arguments or critiques to each one. However, he mentions only few fundamental authorities, without any overabundant list of thinkers. Compared to other treatises on the same topic (Achillini's *De elementis*; Pomponazzi's *De incantationibus*), the list of authorities and philosophical positions is far more concise, and always limited to ancient philosophers (Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Ptolemy) or medieval interpreters (Avicenna, Averroes, Thomas of Aquin). ²⁵ Such

²² See THORNDIKE, *History of Magic*, vol. V, p. 552, 554.

²³ See the quotation from GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 2 E-F: « Verum ut, ommissa longiori praefatione, ad rem deveniam, illud tantum lectorem admonitum esse volo: nos huic opusculo nullum eloquentiae fucum aut verborum ornatum esse adhibitueros, sed satis nos facturos putare si res alioqui difficiles atque obscurae suapte natura tractentur a nobis ea dicendi forma eoque orationis genere, ut intelligi dilucide queant »; GASPARIS CONTARENI *Compendium*, 1571, p. 96 F: « [...] nunquam mihi hac operam adsumendam esse decrevi, ut opusculum hoc nostrum elegantius facerem. Unum ne in eo orationis fucum adhiberem. Verum in eo autem opere tantum elaborandum mihi esse duxi, ut quanto possem, ac compendii modus pateretur, perspicue dicerem de rebus hisce eminentissimis et que suapte natura obscurae nobis sunt aciemque mentis facile effugiant ».

²⁴ The discussion about the 'originality' of Contarini seems still nowadays not concluded. By one side, there are scholars who maintains Contarini's mediocre originality of his philosophical arguments (GLEASON, *Gasparo Contarini*, p. 81–82; GILBERT, « Religion and politics », p. 102; GIOVANNI DI NAPOLI, *Studi sul Rinascimento*, Giannini, Napoli 1973, p. 300); by the other side, those who underline a peculiar critical attitude which reveals a true philosophical care (E. BLUM, P. R. BLUM, « Gasparo Contarini Philosopher », p. 488, p. 494). A medium position can be read in ROSSI, « Sempre alla pietà », p. 325.

²⁵ Fundamental information about Contarini's philosophical studies were given by LUDOVICO BECCADELLI, *Vita del cardinale Contarini*, in GIAMBATTISTA MORANDI, *Monumenti di varia letteratura tratti dai manoscritti di Monsignor Lodovico Beccadelli arcivescovo di Ragusa*, t. 1/2, nell'Istituto delle Scienze, Bologna 1799, p. 123: « la professione principale delle sue lettere fu philosophia et theologia, le quali accompagnò con le mathematiche, cioè con quella parte che tratta Euclide nelli *Elementi*, et la considerazione del moto de' cieli ». In a polemic letter of Pietro Giustiniani to Contarini, dated in Camaldoli on May 12th, 1512, the monk lists Euclid, Aristotle and Avicenna as

a reduction makes the text very easier to follow for a casual reader, who might not be acquainted with every member of the Scholastic tradition.

There are two further aspects of the text which might have contributed to its success. Firstly, Contarini shows a critical attitude towards his sources. He never embraces entirely one doctrine or one philosophical system, but he rather prefers to analyze every single topic according to empirical evidence. This peculiar attitude is particularly evident in relation to Thomism: Contarini never hesitates to underline Aquinas' theological insufficiency and to embrace opposite positions (the most evident examples are the permanence of elementary shapes in the mixture – taken from Averroes – and the emanative system – which he explicitly found in Avicenna).²⁶

Secondly, Contarini tries to provide concrete clarifications of the difficult concepts, by exemplifying them with daily examples. The second book of *De elementis*, which should expose the structures of the four elements, is combined with an autobiographical empiric method. When Contarini describes water and the movements of the sea, he cannot but address his readers, pointing at the ordinary experience of maritime tide which every Venetian perfectly knew.²⁷ In Contarini's view, the description of natural philosophy goes always in parallel

fundamental authorities for Contarini (the letter was edited by GIOVANNI BENEDETTO MITTARELLI, *Annales camaldulenses, aere monasterii sancti Michaelis de Muriano* 1760, vol. IX, p. 552). Another important source was the brother-in-law and close friend, Matteo Dandolo, who in a biographical draft lists Plato, Aristotle, Homer, Vergil, Horace and Lucretius (see GIGLIOLA FRAGNITO, *Memoria individuale e costruzione biografica: Beccadelli, Della Casa, Vettori alle origini di un mito*, Argalia, Urbino 1978 (Pubblicazioni dell'Università di Urbino, Serie di lettere e filosofia, 39), in part. p. 179; EAD., *Gasparo Contarini*, p. 123–124; JOHANNES BARTUSCHAT, « The Bibliographies of Gasparo Contarini by Giovanni Della Casa and Ludovico Beccadelli and the Ideal of Christian Humanism », in ELLEN DE DONCKER, TOMÁŠ NEJESCHLEBA, ANDREA ALDO ROBIGLIO (eds.), *Philosophy and Biography in the Age of Charles V*, vol. I: *Gasparo Contarini and His World*, University of Cordoba Press, Cordoba 2020 (forthcoming).

²⁶ Many scholars underlined – sometime even too much – Contarini's debt to the Thomism. See for example DI NAPOLI, *L'immortalità dell'anima nel Rinascimento*, p. 180 and p. 291; EUGENIO GARIN, *Storia della filosofia*, Einaudi, Torino 1966, vol. II, p. 30. I advanced some remarks to this conclusion in BURZELLI, « Aspetti della tradizione aristotelica », p. 365–390.

²⁷ Contarini first composed a brief treatise on the movement of the seas [*De aestu maris*] and offered it to his brothers, who were sea-merchants. This text disappeared soon after the composition, since Contarini lent it and was never able to get it back (see IOHANNIS CASA *Vita cardinalis Contareni*, in GASPARIS CONTARENI *Opera*, 1571, p. Diiijr: « Quin etiam eodem honesto desiderio incensus ut utilitatibus fratrum suorum serviret, qui crebro mercaturis faciendis operam dantes navigabant, confecit libellum de aestu maris et quam causam reciproca illa fluctuum agitatio haberet diligenter monstravit. Qui tamen liber amico ipsius commodatus, magno adhibito studio recuperari nunquam potuit »). The only hypothetical source of it is a little anonymous fragment concerning tides, conserved in Milan, Venerabile Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS. R 104 sup., already noticed by DITTRICH, *Regesten und Briefe*, p. 361–363. This work shows Contarini's attitude to 'pragmatic inquiry' of physical phenomena: an inquiry that should be useful for his community.

with the concrete experience of natural phenomena; and he invites his reader to follow him in the inspection of these natural laws. It is not by chance that the words *experiential-experimentum-experire* recur 27 times in *De elementis* and in some cases they help solving old philosophical problems: the Aristotelian question on whether equatorial areas were habitable or not, is finally resolved by mentioning the recent Portuguese explorations.²⁸

V. A case of plagiarism (?)

The treatise *De elementis* had, as we have seen, five printed editions (1548, 1564, 1571, 1578, 1589). In parallel, it was object of a unique case of plagiarism between Venice and Paris. In 1557 Paolo Manuzio published a book in the volgare, titled *De gli elementi e di molti loro notabili effetti*. This edition, containing some excerpts of *De elementis* together with two arguments about the immortality of the soul by Rinaldo Odoni, was dedicated to Paolo Giustiniani, abbot of S. Andrea di Busco – not to be confused with Contarini's close friend Paolo Giustiniani, addressee of his *Compendium primae philosophiae*. The text of *De elementis* is deeply transformed in this edition. It is vulgarized, it lacks the books III–V and, for the remaining parts, it is cut and recomposed. The only way to identify the two text is to consider each single proposition and its correspondent in the Latin text.

We may ask if it represents real case of plagiarism, as Lynn Thorndike and Elizabeth Gleason maintained. Thorndike focalized on the intention of the Venetian editor:

Since Manutio not only does not mention Contarini whom he often repeats verbatim, but in his preface professes to state in Italian “what the most learned philosophers have said on this subject in diverse books”, his volume must be regarded as an overt and shameless piece of plagiarism, although as an abbreviated translation it is not unskillful.²⁹

As a matter of fact, the edition might have seemed less ‘shameless’ than Thorndike said, if he had noticed that his quotation about the ‘learned philosophers’ was quite imprecise. Manuzio didn’t write this proposition in his preface, but rather in the text (fol. 4r), without presenting it as *his own* collection of philosophical authorities – as it would have appeared from a preface. The *learned philosophers* are simply those authorities recalled by Gasparo. We do not

²⁸ GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 39D–40E: « Hanc quaestionem, quae multis iam annis versata est inter maximos philosophos, nostris temporibus experientia dissoluit. Nam ex hac nova Hispanorum ac praecipue Lusitanorum navigatione compertum est sub circulo aequinoctiali et inter tropicos habitationem esse [...]. Ergo sub aequinoctiali circulo est habitatio, quod nemo negare potest; non tamen temperatissima omnium, ut putavit Avicenna ».

²⁹ THORNDIKE, *History of Magic*, vol. V, p. 555–556.

have sufficient evidence to demonstrate that Manuzio himself was maliciously pretending to publish *his own* treatise on elements, instead of an anonymous treatise on elements. And we might list three arguments proving this second possibility: first of all, the frontispiece of the edition never mentions Manuzio as author of the treatise, which appears clearly anonymous; second, the edition contains other two texts, so that it looks more like a collection of other people's works than a personal treatise; third, the text was published in Venice, where the family Contarini was moving to protect Gasparo's works from unauthorized editions (like Paris 1548; or Florence 1553 for *De potestate pontificis*).³⁰ Thus, we wonder if Manuzio really thought to publish the treatise of his old friend Contarini, with the certainty that no one would have noticed the similarity – a clear similarity, even if the text shows none of Gasparo's biographical digressions.

In conclusion, we should be more careful in talking about a 'shameless' case of plagiarism for Manuzio's edition. Instead, a real case of plagiarism happened to the translation of Manuzio himself. One year after the publication, Jacques Charpentier, professor at the university of Paris, published the same text in France, but translated back into Latin, without any reference to Contarini or Manuzio.³¹ Lynn Thorndike finally mentions a Parisian surgeon, François Rassius Noëns, who soon realized the illicit act and annotated on his copy «he [Charpentier] is an impudent plagiarist».³² However, Noëns referred the book to Manuzio instead of Contarini.

VI. A useful exposition of maritime movements

One of the main topics which explains the success of Contarini's *De elementis* is the description of maritime movements. This description occupies a big part of the second book of *De elementis*, and it is entirely based on a direct experience of those movements: Contarini gives the example of oceanic sea-flows that he experienced during his travels in England and Spain, and of the tides he observed in Venice and Flanders.³³ The first quotation of this description can be found in

³⁰ Significantly, FRAGNITO, *Gasparo Contarini*, p. 310–313, observed that the family had a strong interest in an official publication of Gasparo's works, which could front the heterodox interpretation of some of his arguments.

³¹ See *De elementis et variis eorum effetis iisque potissimum quae in meteoris apparent liber ex Italarum vernaculis Latinus factus per Iac. Carpentarium Bellouacum*, ex typographia Matthaei Davidis via amygdalina ad veritatis insigne, Parisiis 1558.

³² THORNDIKE, *History of Magic*, vol. V, p. 556.

³³ Many letters and parts of *De elementis* are full of descriptions of physical phenomena around Europe. See, for examples, the description of tides in Belgium (Contarini al Senato, 16 novembre 1525, p. 23: « La marea poi che cresce dal mare gonfia l'acque talmente, che sino in Bruselles io ho veduto il fiume ritornare in suso »); EIUSD. *De elementis*, II, 1571, p. 31A–B: « Vidi ego in

Giulio Sirenio's *De fato libri novem*.³⁴ Facing the problem of the causal chain (book III, c. 56), Sirenio list a group of arguments which belong to the Aristotelian school. The movement of the First Cause determinates the consequential movement of the celestial spheres and, through them, of the sublunar world. As a terrestrial sign of this divine influence, Sirenio quotes a big excerpt from Contarini's *De elementis*, book II, concerning the movement of the oceans and of Mediterranean sea, from East to West.³⁵ It is important to notice that, due to a lack of other texts, Sirenio could only quote from the Parisian edition of Divites 1548.

Only few years later, also Francesco Patrizi took information from Contarini's *De elementis*, quoting his position on the movement of the sea in connection with the drainage of the river Po nearby Ferrara (1579). The Venetian philosopher became in turn a new authority, whom Patrizi quotes after old philosophers (Aristotle) and historians (Polybius). The reason for this reference is the great advantage of the experiential evidence which Contarini can count on in his treatise, due to the narrations of the sailormen and to his own experiences on the sea:

Et se egli non crede a me, che questi mari corrano, rilegga i luoghi di Aristotile et di Polibio da me sopra addotti, et di più il libro del mondo et il libro degli elementi del Cardinale Contarini et ragioni con marinai che gli habbiano navigati [...].³⁶

It is important to underline the association between Contarini's *book of the elements* and the *book of the world*. This connection seems to show that Contarini's methodology in *De elementis* was appreciated exactly for its concrete concern for

Belgica, quae nunc Flandria nuncupatur, flumina crescente maris aestu retrofluere eorumque refluxum percipi in locis etiam a mari valde distantibus. In Britannia vidi Tamisim fluvium ingentem Londini, quod a mari distat quinquaginta fere millibus passuum, sursum ad fontes refluere cursu praecipiti ».

³⁴ IULII SIRENII *De fato libri novem*, in quibus inter alia, de contingentia, necessitate, providentia, praescientia divina, prophetia, et divinatione, tam secundum philosophorum opinionem, quam secundum catholicorum theologorum sententiam, ex officina Iordani Zileti, Venetiis 1563. For more information concerning Giulio Sirenio (Brescia 1553–1593), professor of metaphysics and theology in Bologna, see ANTHONY OSSA-RICHARDSON, *The Devil's Tabernacle: The Pagan Oracles in Early Modern Thought*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2013, p. 112. It is interesting to underline that the printer Giordano Ziletti, who published Sirenio's treatise in 1563, had already published just one year before also some of Contarini's works in an unauthorized edition (*Gasparis Contareni card. amplissimi De potestate pontificis, quod divinitus sit tradita commentarius. Eiusdem Conciliorum magis illustrium summa*, 1562). This proves a widespread circulation of Contarini's treatises and ideas among intellectuals in the north of Italy.

³⁵ IULII SIRENII *De fato libri novem*, 1563, fol. 49r–v. The quotation of Contarini corresponds to GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1548, fol. 32r–33v (Eiusd. *De elementis*, 1571, p. 30G–31 D).

³⁶ FRANCESCO PATRIZI DA CHERSO, *Sopra l'arenamento del Po di Ferrara*, in ID., *Lettere ed opuscoli inediti*, ed. DANILO AGUZZI BARBAGLI, nella sede dell'Istituto, Palazzo Strozzi, Firenze 1975, p. 288.

the empirical state of things, far more than on the rightness of philosophical doctrine.³⁷ Patrizi's interest in the work of Contarini can be proved by some references in *Nova de universis philosophia* (1591), still concerning the movement of the water. In the third part of the section *Pancosmia*, Patrizi quotes Contarini on two different issues. First, Contarini's account is useful to describe the circulation of water [*littorum circuitione*], which moves from Black Sea to Gibraltar, and then it goes back along the African coasts.³⁸ Second, in a short quotation concerning the elevation of the earth, Patrizi considers explicitly Contarini as one of the most representatives of the Renaissance Aristotelianism [*nostro saeculo peripateticus summus*].³⁹ This – apparently neutral – evaluation will be useful to understand Contarini's controversial relationship with Bernardino Telesio and Tommaso Campanella.

VII. *With or against Aristotle*

Despite some arguments, which are evidently not aristotelian (on the form of elements; on the habitable zones), Contarini composed his *De elementis* in accordance to the treatises of Aristotle: this is evident when we consider the theory of the four qualities and their contacts, which is related without any doubt to Aristotle's exposition of *De generatione et corruptione*, II. This general accordance justifies the epithet of *peripateticus summus* which Patrizi attributed to Contarini, and in this direction we might consider the entire reception of *De elementis* in the second half of the sixteenth century. Therefore, it is interesting to analyze a complex debate between pro and anti-Aristotelians, which involved posthumously Contarini himself against Bernardino Telesio.

³⁷ In this respect, it is useful to remember the question on equatorial regions in *De elementis* II. In that case the methodology of Contarini appears clearly: he lists Aristotle's and Averroes' positions and then he concludes with the experience of Portuguese sailors.

³⁸ FRANCISCI PATRITII (DE CHERSO) *Nova de universis philosophia*, apud Benedictus Mammarellus, Ferrariae 1591, fol. 147v: « Si vero verum sit, quod iam retulimus, et quod Gaspar Contarenus cardinalis retulit, mare quod a Ponto fluit, ea quam descripsimus littorum circuitione, per africana et hispanica littora in Oceanum exit ». See GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 31C–D: « Is maris motus iuxta littora a solertibus nautis ubique fere deprehenditur in mari hoc Mediterraneo: quo videri potest mare hoc veluti in gyrum moveri. Nam ab Hellesponto occidentem versus flectitur ac perpetuo eius cursus tenore circuit uniuersam oram continentis ad columnas usque Herculeas unde vero per oras Africae, Aegypti, Syriae flectitur ad Solis ortum ».

³⁹ *Ibid*, fol. 152r: « Sed eo modo, quo Gaspar Contarenus cardinalis, nostro saeculo peripateticus summus, demonstravit terram nullibi nullaue sui parte esse simplicem, praeter quam circa centrum ». GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 35 A: « Terram puram, neque aliena qualitate adfectam, neque immixtam alienis corporibus inueniri posse iuxta mundi centrum ».

Telesio published the first edition of *De rerum natura* in Rome in 1565, then in Naples in 1570 with substantial revisions.⁴⁰ In this work, he develops a difficult question concerning the qualities of fire, namely heat and dryness. Aristotle had distinguished the two qualities of dryness and moisture on the basis of the possibility to delimit the body by means of an intrinsic or external agent: we call *dry* what can be delimited by its own limit but it is not limitable by external one; on the contrary, we call *moist* what cannot be delimited by its own limit, but only by an external one.⁴¹ The distinction can be observed also empirically in the shape of things: a dry body, like a skeleton, conserves his form/shape more constantly and its alteration depends from the intrinsic dryness; on the contrary, a moist body, like fog, shows no form/shape, but it assume a form thanks to external agents.⁴²

Now, according to Aristotle, fire is composed by the conjunction of heat and dryness, and thus it is the driest and hottest of the four elements. However, empirical evidence shows that it represents a problematic case for the previous distinction: everyone can verify that fire has no shape, but rather it gets the shape of the container. Therefore, we must face a contradiction: a body that is driest – and thus it should not admit extrinsic determination – seems also determinable by external agent. Contarini himself encountered difficulties when he had to face the problem: «fire is very dry. However, it is determined and defined easily by external limit: namely, by the container».⁴³ First, Contarini expounded a solution but he confessed that he had no arguments to approve or disapprove it. According to this anonymous position [*nonnulli summi viri*], fire cannot be determined since it is the most rarefied body.⁴⁴ Then Contarini

⁴⁰ See BERNARDINI TELESII *De rerum natura iuxta propria principia liber primus, et secundus, denuo editi*, apud Iosephum Cacchium, Neapoli 1570 [in Id., *La natura secondo i suoi principi*, trans. ROBERTO BONDI, La Nuova Italia, Firenze 1999 (Paperbacks. Classici, 36)]. For more information see the entry of MICHAELA BOENKE, «Bernardino Telesio», *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2019), *ad indicem*.

⁴¹ ARISTOTLE, *De generatione et corruptione*, II, 2, 329b30–32 [apud Iunctas, Venetiis 1562, fol. 373 B]: «Humidum id videtur, quod proprio quidem termino indeterminabile est, alieno vero bene determinabile. Siccum contra quod proprio quidem termino bene terminabile est, alieno vero indeterminabile». Cf. BERNARDINI TELESII *De rerum natura*, p. 285–286.

⁴² The question concerning the shapes can be found in the commentary of Telesio to Aristotle's words. See BERNARDINI TELESII *De rerum natura*, p. 285–286. The examples of skeleton and fog are not by Telesio.

⁴³ GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, III, p. 51 A: «ignis siccissimus est: tamen formatur et terminatur facile termino alieno, continentis inquam».

⁴⁴ GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, III, p. 51 A: «nonnulli summi viri [...] inquitque propterea siccum ignis et terrae non terminari termino alieno, humidum vero aquae, et aëris facile terminari posse: quoniam ignis, licet possit densari, rarefieri tamen amplius nequit (maxima etenim raritas omnium corporum est raritas ignis); item terra, quamvis possit fieri rarior, fieri tamen densior nequit (densissima namque omnium est). Contra, humiditas aquae et aëris possunt deduci in utram partem voveris: vel scilicet ad maiorem raritatem, vel ad

proposed his own solution, which completes the previous one by radicalizing the Aristotelian analysis:

It belongs to dryness in virtue of its nature and per se to concentrate the body in which it is per se the primary quality, and consequently dryness makes it so that it can hardly be delimited and bound by an external limit. Thus, [the body] where dryness is not first [quality], but rather following – where the first [quality] faces the concentration of dryness – there is nothing strange if that body is delimited by an external limit. [...] Therefore, earth cannot be delimited or defined by an external term. [But] dryness in the fire is secondary, almost dependent on heat. As a matter of fact, fire is first and per se very hot, and dryness makes this heat greater. Thus, fire must be dry, but it is not concentrated by dryness.⁴⁵

According to Contarini, fire is dry, but dryness is not its first quality: for this reason, fire can be determined by external limit or agent.

Contarini's solution is based on two principles: first, fire represents the highest level of heat and dryness, and it must exclude moisture; second, fire grows up from the combination of two qualities, heat and dryness (of which the first is necessary, while the second is accidental). These two aspects of the analysis are radically reconsidered by Bernardino Telesio. He devotes book II, chapter 19 of this treatise to prove that heat cannot combine with dryness: against Aristotle, who misinterpreted nature and senses [*naturae itemque sensuique discors*], Telesio maintains that heat is always combined with moisture.⁴⁶ In this way Telesio breaks one of the fundamental laws of Aristotelian physics, since he admits at the same time more than two qualities in the same element: fire should be then hot, dry but also moist. This conclusion arrived at book II, chapter 25, which is rightly titled «fire is not dry, but moist».⁴⁷

maiolem densitatem. Ideoque terminabilis est alieno termino ». It is fundamental to quote this first position, since the readers of Contarini's treatise, as we will show, made a big mistake, quoting a wrong text.

⁴⁵ GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, III, p. 51 B–C: « Siccitati suapte natura et per se convenire ut constipet corpus illud in quo primo per se est; indeque efficiat ut aegre terminari queat et definiri termino alieno, sed ut proprium terminum suamque finitionem obtineat, alienam respuat. Sic ubi vero sit siccitas non primo, sed per sequelam quandam (ubi id quod primo inest illi corpori obstiterit constipationi siccitatis) nil mirum si corpus id alieno termino terminabile est. [...] Ideoque non terminabilis aut finibilis est terra termino alieno. In igne vero siccitas est secundario quasi assecla caloris. Etenim ignis primo et per se calidissimus est; at siccitas calorem acuit: ideo oportuit ignem esse siccum; non tamen a siccitate constipatur ».

⁴⁶ BERNARDINI TELESII *De rerum natura*, II, c. 25, p. 256: « Propria igitur caloris et caloris opus humiditas, quae ubicunque calor adest agens vertensque, vel integra ipsa adest puraque, vel imminuta saltem atque impura ».

⁴⁷ BERNARDINI TELESII *De rerum natura*, II, c. 25, p. 288: « Quoniam igitur Aristoteli imprimis humida quae sunt contingenti cedere et locum praebere videntur, mollia omnino esse, sicca contra reniti obsistereque locum abnegare, dura omnino esse, Aristoteli imprimis sublunarium

Such a radical reinterpretation of the doctrine of the qualities couldn't but mobilize the academic philosophy. Plenty of official philosophers, but even heterogeneous intellectuals with a philosophical formation, started writing against Telesio, and put Contarini into the foreground of their argumentations. The first who shouted against Telesio was Jacopo Mazzoni, the philosopher who in 1588 would become professor in Pisa and Rome: his lessons in Pisa were attended even by a young physician, Galileo Galilei.⁴⁸ In 1576 Mazzoni printed in Cesena a large book, titled *De triplici hominum vita*, in which he collected 5197 philosophical and theological questions to be discussed. Contarini is explicitly mentioned twice: first, together with Alessandro Achillini in question 3751, concerning weight and lightness; second, in question 3787, concerning the disposition of water and earth for the benefit of human and animal life.⁴⁹

In his argumentative strategy, Jacopo Mazzoni does not only quote explicitly Contarini, but rather he uses him also silently, as source of new arguments. In questions 3786–3790, Mazzoni put together many arguments by quoting the second book of Contarini's *De elementis* in a new order and without the name of their original author:

Mazzoni, <i>De triplici hominum vita</i>	Contarini, <i>De elementis</i>
Praeter hanc rationem a fine sumptam, aliam quoque non incommode adducit. Cum enim Solis, Lunae, caeterorumque omnium siderum radij, quin potius universi coeli lumina in unum cogantur in hoc mundi centro, ubi terram aquam attingit, nimirum vi caloris siderum fieri quandam	Caeterum, praeter hanc rationem a fine sumptam, alia etiam (ut reor) non incommode adduci potest. Etenim cum Solis, Lunae, caeterorumque omnium syderum radij, quin potius universi coeli lumina in unum cogantur in hoc mundi centro, ubi terram aqua attingit; nimirum

omnium ignis purus praesertim ille syncerusque; qui coelo subiacet sublunarium omnium mollissimus maximeque cedens humidissimus videri debet, non aliis modo omnibus, sed aere etiam ipso tenuior illi visus, eaque ratione aerem tenuitate excedere, qua aer aquam et aqua Terram ».

⁴⁸ For more information on Jacopo Mazzoni, see DAVIDE DALMAS, « Mazzoni Jacopo », *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 72 (2008), *ad indicem*.

⁴⁹ For the first question, see JACOBI MAZZONI *De triplici hominum vita*, p. 282: « [...] cum vero gravitas et levitas sint principia motus naturalis intrinseca elementis, erunt igitur eorum natura: sed non materia, ut perspicuum est; ergo erunt natura quae est forma. Quam sane sententiam cardinalis Contarenus doctissimus vir labefactare conatus est ». Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, II, p. 12 G, where Contarini defines weight and lightness like *proprium* of the bodies. For the second question, see JACOBI MAZZONI *De triplici hominum vita*, p. 285r: « Pro cuius rei declaratione multa et recte dixit cardinalis Contarenus; et primo ratione finis id fuisse factum asseruit, ut ad conservationem animalium perfectorum terrae haec superficies emeretur, praeter aquae et terrae nexum – quemadmodum in animalibus multa constituent praeter naturam materiae ratione finis, ut sinciput os durissimum et terreum, ac propterea grave, positum tame nest ratione finis in suprema hominis parte ». Mazzoni quotes from GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, vol. II, p. 35 H.

terrae et aquae mixtionem, ac quandam terraei elementi fermentationem exteriorem hanc terrae partem rarescere et intumescere, quod quotidie fieri cernimus in panis confectione a pistoribus, fermento apposito. ⁵⁰	necessum est vi caloris syderum fieri quandam terrae et aquae mixtionem, ac quandam terrei elementi fermentatione exteriorem hanc terrae partem rarescere et intumescere: quod quotidie fieri cernimus in panis confectione a pistoribus fermento apposito.
Praeterea, ut exactius quaestionem hanc absolvamus, dicere possumus in mari minime contineri omnem aquarum copiam, sed infra terram in maximis specubus maximam vim aquae contineri. Item universam hanc quam incolimus terram, quae tot fontibus, tot fluminibus irrigetur, quae ubique vestitur herbis et plantis, aqua plenam esse veluti spongiam quondam. ⁵¹	[...] quo fit, ut recte dixerimus, in mari minime contineri omnem aquarum copiam, sed infra terram in maximis illis specubus maximam vim aquae contineri. Item uniuersam hanc, quam incolimus, terram, quae tot fontibus, tot fluminibus rigatur, quae ubique vestitur herbis et plantis, aqua plenam esse veluti spongiam quondam.
Postremo, cum aer hic quem colimus omni ex parte semper innumeris vaporibus plenus sit, vapor vero sit aquae disgregatio nimirum hoc pacto haec quoque terrae superficies, quam maria non tegunt ambitur aquis. ⁵²	Nam cum aër hic, quem colimus, omni ex parte semper innumeris vaporibus plenus sit; vapor vero sit aquae disgregatio, nimirum hoc pacto haec quoque terre superficies, quam maria non tegunt, ambitur aquis, id est vaporibus qui sunt aqua disgregata et rarior effecta.
Corollarium: hinc et Homerus cecinit (licet alio in sensu haec accipiat Aristoteles) fluvium Oceanum, undique terram circumfluere. ⁵³	Praeterea, uniuersus hic aër plenus vaporibus est, unde Homerus cecinit (ut bis superius diximus) fluvium Oceanum undique terram circumfluere.
Propterea nobis facile persuadere possumus, si omnis haec copia in unum colligeretur aquam longe maiorem terra futuram esse, pulchreque servari eam proportionem inter haec duo elementa, qua mundus perdurare queat. ⁵⁴	Propterea facile nobis persuadere possumus, si omnis haec aquae copia in unum colligeretur, aquam longe maiorem terra futuram esse; pulchreque seruari eam proportionem inter haec duo elementa, qua mundus perdurare queat.

Suddenly, from q. 3792 Mazzoni introduces the question on fire, proposed by Bernardino Telesio, *vir acutissimus*. First, he mentions Philoponus' vain attempt to resolve the question; then he observes that, according to Telesio, fire is moist and

⁵⁰ JACOBI MAZZONI *De triplici hominum vita*, fol. 285r, q. 3786. Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 35 H.

⁵¹ Ibid, q. 3787. Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 36 G.

⁵² Ibid, q. 3788. Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 36 F.

⁵³ Ibid, q. 3789. Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 36 G.

⁵⁴ Ibid, q. 3790. Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 36 G–H.

hot. The solution of this question is exposed in qq. 3793–3794, and in both cases he quotes directly Contarini’s text without mentioning him.

Mazzoni, <i>De triplici hominum vita</i>	Contarini, <i>De elementis</i>
Cui, ut diximus rationi cum Philopono minime satisfecerit, recentiores nonnulli conati sunt melius satisfacere. <u>Dicunt enim ignem et terram facile terminari posse</u> , quoniam ignis, licet possit densari, rarefieri tamen amplius nequit (maxima enim raritas omnium corporum est raritas ignis); item terra, quamvis possit fieri rarior, fieri tamen densior nequit. Densissima namque omnium est. Contra, humiditas aquae et aeris possunt deduci in utram partem volueris: vel scilicet ad maiorem raritatem, vel ad maiorem densitatem, ideoque terminabilis est alieno termino. Putamus nos melius responderi posse. ⁵⁵	nonnulli summi viri quaestionem hanc ita solvunt inquitque propterea siccum ignis et terrae <u>non terminari termino alieno, humidum vero aquae, et aëris facile terminari posse</u> : quoniam ignis, licet possit densari, rarefieri tamen amplius nequit (maxima etenim raritas omnium corporum est raritas ignis); item terra, quamvis possit fieri rarior, fieri tamen densior nequit (densissima namque omnium est). Contra, humiditas aquae et aëris possunt deduci in utram partem volueris: vel scilicet ad maiorem raritatem, vel ad maiorem densitatem. Ideoque terminabilis est alieno termino
Dicamus itaque siccitati suapte natura per se convenire ut constipet corpus illud in quo primo et per se est; <u>indeque non effici ut terminari queat</u> et definiri termino alieno, sed ut proprium terminum suamque finitionem obtineat, alienam respuat. Sicubi vero si siccitas non primo, sed per sequelam quandam, ubi id quod primo inest illi corpori obstiterit constipationi siccitatis, nil mirum si corpus illud alieno termino, terminabile est. In igne vero siccitas est secundario, quasi assecla caloris. ⁵⁶	Siccitati suapte natura et per se convenire ut constipet corpus illud in quo primo per se est; <u>indeque efficiat ut aegre terminari queat</u> et definiri termino alieno, sed ut proprium terminum suamque finitionem obtineat, alienam respuat. Sic ubi vero sit siccitas non primo, sed per sequelam quandam (ubi id quod primo inest illi corpori obstiterit constipationi siccitatis) nil mirum si corpus id alieno termino terminabile est. [...] Ideoque non terminabilis aut finibilis est terra termino alieno. In igne vero siccitas est secundario quasi assecla caloris.

We underlined some words in the quotation from *De elementis*, since they highlight some interesting problems in the comprehension of the text. Without a doubt Mazzoni quoted those sentences from one of the French editions of *De elementis* (1548 – 1564), since only these editions present the gap in q. 3792, [... *non terminari termino alieno, humidum vero aquae, et aëris...*] as much as the mistake of *non effici* instead of *efficiat*.⁵⁷ The first gap is probably due to a *saut du même au*

⁵⁵ Ibid, q. 3792. Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 51 A.

⁵⁶ Ibid, q. 3793. Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 51 B–C.

⁵⁷ See GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1548, fol. 52r–v.

même, while every other printed edition and manuscript contains the correct variants. However, this *saut* is relevant, for it changes deeply the meaning of the text: indeed, it wrongly associates the term *dry* with the definition of *moist*. Therefore, we cannot but highlight the scarce originality and attention of Mazzoni in the redaction of his argumentation: he merely lists plenty of Contarini's arguments – without mentioning the author or respecting their order – but, above all, he seems not to be aware of copying a wrong text, which defends exactly what Mazzoni is writing against: namely, he is not aware that admitting the extrinsic determinability of fire is exactly the purpose of Telesio.⁵⁸

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The quotations of Contarini's argument must have contributed to make him one of the main representatives of the academic Aristotelianism, fighting against Bernardino Telesio. One of Mazzoni's readers was Jacopo Antonio Marta, a philosopher from Naples who in 1587 published a *Propugnaculum Aristotelis adversus principia Bernardini Telesii*.⁵⁹ It is not an original work, since it is mostly composed out of arguments taken from other authors defending Aristotle. However, among this arguments Marta set also the quotation of Contarini.

There is no possibility to prove that Marta knew directly the treatise *De elementis*. The mention of Contarini appears only once in *Propugnaculum* and it concerns the question of weight and lightness which had been discussed also by Mazzoni. As a matter of fact, Marta quotes together Achillini, Averroes, Mazzoni and Contarini, and it is reasonable to believe that he was looking only at Mazzoni's book:

Tell how weight and lightness can be substantial forms of the elements, if we have said that they do not feel. Alexander Achillini and Mazzoni, question 3751, said that substantial forms have been assumed in relation to weight and lightness, which do not perceive in any way. Cardinal Contarini understood this very well in the first book of *De elementis*.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ For an evaluation of Mazzoni's *De triplici hominum vita* see GARIN, *Storia della filosofia italiana*, vol. II, p. 607, who describes the treatise as a « massa caotica di erudizione non dominata ».

⁵⁹ JACOBI ANTONII MARTAE *Propugnaculum Aristotelis adversus principia Bernardini Telesii*, Typis Bartholomaei Bonfadini, Romae 1587. For information about Marta, see MATTEO BARBIERI, *Notizie storiche dei mattematici e filosofi del Regno di Napoli*, Vincenzo Mazzola-Vocola, Napoli 1778, p. 99; SALVATORE SPIRITI, *Memorie degli scrittori Cosentini*, nella stamperia dei Muzi, Napoli 1750, p. 91.

⁶⁰ JACOBI ANTONII MARTAE *Propugnaculum*, p. 99: « Dices quomodo gravitas et levitas possunt esse formae substantiales elementorum, si dictum est ipsas non sentire. Alexander Achillinus et Mazonius, quaest. 3751, dixerunt quod sunt substantiales formae sumptae pro gravitatione et levitatione, quae nullo modo sentiuntur; quod optime olfecit cardinalis Contarenus, primo libro de elementis ».

In addition, Marta tries to answer to the question of fire. He mentions Telesio's argument concerning the combination of heat and moisture in fire. Then he proposes his own position, which repeats literally the text of Contarini, according to the French edition 1548–64:

Ut evellamus has philosophicas freneses, ordinate respondendo ad primam, quae fuit soluta ab illustrioribus viris, me satis praecedentibus ante, quomodo ignis facile caedat. Dico quod siccitati convenit ex sui natura ut constipet illud in quo primo et per se est; et inde non efficitur ut possit terminari termino alieno, sed tenet adhuc proprium terminum et propriam definitionem et aliam reiiciat; sed si siccitati non primo, sed per accidens, ubi id quod primo inest illi corpori obstiterit constipationi siccitatis, nil mirum si illud terminatur termino alieno, prout bene Mazzonius.⁶¹

It seems almost evident that Marta is quoting from Mazzoni, whom he mentions at the end of the paragraph, since the variants and the mistakes of the text are the same. Marta presents the paragraph as an exposition of the theories of eminent intellectuals who preceded him [*illustrioribus viris me satis praecedentibus*]. This permits us to understand why Contarini is not mentioned here, but somewhere else: probably, Marta ascribed this argument only to Mazzoni.

The last step in this controversial tradition of the text is Tommaso Campanella, who engaged in a polemic dialogue with Marta, in order to defend the philosophy of Bernardino Telesio.⁶² In Campanella's *Philosophia sensibus demonstrata* (1589–91) we find once more the text of Contarini, but quoted from the pamphlet of Marta; by the way, Campanella seems absolutely unaware he is quoting the Venetian cardinal:

Iterum, respondet Marta, ignis, inquit, et terra facile terminantur, quia ignis licet possit densari, nequit tamen rarefieri; maxima enim raritas omnium corporum est illa ignis, et terra quamvis possit fieri rarior, tamen nequit fieri

⁶¹ JACOBI ANTONII MARTAE *Propugnaculum*, p. 81–82. The exposition goes on quoting Contarini's text: «Dicimus ignem et terram facile terminari posse, quia ignis, licet possit densari, tamen nequit rarefieri (maxima enim raritas omnium corporum est illa ignis) et terra, quamvis possit fieri rarior, tamen nequit fieri densior (sensissima namque omnium corporum est). Et humiditas aquae et aeris possunt duci in quam partem volueris, vel ad maiorem raritatem, vel densitatem. Ideoque terminabile est alieno termino ».

⁶² This polemic is contained in THOMAE CAMPANELLAE *Philosophia sensibus demonstrata*, apud Horatium Salvianum, Neapoli 1591 [ed. LUIGI DE FRANCO, Vivarium, Napoli 1992]. On Campanella see GERMANA ERNST, «Tommaso Campanella», *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ad indicem. On the treatise, see GIOVANNI DI NAPOLI, *Tommaso Campanella*, Cedam, Padova 1947, p. 331 sgg.; BERNARDINO M. BONANSEA, *Tommaso Campanella*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington 1969, p. 25–26, 189–193; GERMANA ERNST, *Tommaso Campanella. The Book and the Body of Nature*, Heidelberg – London – New York, Springer 2010 (Archives internationales d'histoire des idées, 200), p. 8–14.

densior. Nam densitas sua est maxima; humiditates aquae autem et aeris possunt in quamlibet duci partem.⁶³

The quotation of Marta's book itself seems proved by the transmission of the corrupted text on the words [*ignis et terra (...) facile terminantur*]. However, Campanella answers the old argument of Contarini by supporting the position of Telesio and adding plenty of ancient authorities.

VIII. Contarini, Galileo and the Collegio Romano

The last part of Contarini's success in sixteenth century has to do with the Collegio Romano, the Jesuit school founded in Rome by Ignatius of Loyola in 1534.⁶⁴ As we can prove from the list of the classes of natural philosophy, many professors of Physics resorted to Contarini's *De elementis* in order to explain the issue on the substantial forms of the elements. Three names are particularly important: Antonio Menu (class of natural philosophy in 1577–1578), Paolo Valla (class of natural philosophy in 1588–1589) and Ludovico Rugerio (class of natural philosophy in 1590–1591).⁶⁵ The analysis of the *reportationes* of these classes shows that Contarini was often quoted by the Jesuits among the main authorities (Thomas, Albert, Jandun, Achillini). In addition, William Wallace recently proved that also the young Galileo may have been influenced by these professors, from which he got information and authorities concerning physical issues – and, among these, Contarini.⁶⁶

When he still was student in Pisa, Galilei composed a treatise, titled *De elementis*, which is now contained in his *Juvenilia*.⁶⁷ At the beginning of the work, the physics student lists the major authorities who dwelt with the problem of

⁶³ THOMAE CAMPANELLAE *Philosophia sensibus demonstrata*, disp. IV, p. 339 [ed. DE FRANCO, p. 472].

⁶⁴ It might be useful to repeat here that in 1538 Contarini had been mediator of Loyola to the pope and that the document which authorizes the birth of the Society of Jesus shows Contarini's autograph sign on the last page (see Città del Vaticano, Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, *Archivium Arcis, Arm. I-XVIII*, MS. 6461, fol. 145r–148r: 148r).

⁶⁵ A list of the academic years and the classes is available in WILLIAM WALLACE, *Galileo and his Sources. The Heritage of the Collegio Romano in Galileo's Science*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1984, p. 60, but also p. 61–70 (on the three professors); ID., *Domingo de Soto and the Early Galileo: Essays on Intellectual History*, Routledge, London 2018, p. 18; ID., *Prelude to Galileo. Essay on Medieval and Sixteenth-Century Sources of Galileo's Thought*, Reidel, Dordrecht – Boston – London 1981, p. 243–249.

⁶⁶ Wallace compared Galilei's your treatises and the *reportationes* of the Collegio Romano and showed the literally correspondence of the texts. See WALLACE, *Galileo and his Sources*, p. 74–84; ID., *Prelude to Galileo*, p. 267–281. In any case, we must underline that Wallace never recognized or quoted the name of Gasparo Contarini, nor he observed that Galilei gave also wrong references to Contarini's works.

⁶⁷ GALILEO GALILEI, *Tractatus de elementis*, in *Le opere di Galileo Galilei*, ed. ANTONIO FAVARO, G. Barbera, Firenze 1968, vol. I ('*Juvenilia*'), p. 122–177.

elements: in this list we find first Aristotle, Hippocrates and Galenus; then Gregory of Nyssa, Avicenna and al-Gazali; more recently, Peter of Abano, Alexander Achillini, Gasparo Contarini, Charpentier (who, as we saw, plagiarized Contarini's Venetian edition from Manuzio), Francesco Valleriolo and Girolamo Cardano.⁶⁸

The first interesting question concerns those authorities who maintained that the form of the elements is a substantial form: here we can see how Galileo was influenced by the professors of the Collegio Romano. Indeed, he lists as authorities Thomas, Albert, the *Conciliator*, Jandun, Zimara and, strangely, Contarini's *De elementis*, book 1 and 7 (which doesn't exist; Galilei might have been referring to book 3).⁶⁹ Thanks to Wallace's recovery, we can say that this list is composed on the basis of some Jesuits' lists (Menu, Valla, Rugerio).⁷⁰ However, we might wonder why Galileo added a reference to the 'seventh' – inexistent – book of Contarini, together with the authority of Giles of Rome, both not mentioned by the Jesuit professors. These supplemental authorities could be the proof of Galileo's own revision of the tradition.

A more interesting quotation can be found in the *quaestio quarta*, concerning the intention and remission of elementary forms. Again, we can see that the list, as much as the following argumentation, are entirely copied by the *reportationes* of Menu and Valla. The Jesuit professors and Galileo name the authorities which support the physical position (Averroes, Niphus, Nicoletti, Zimara, Jandun, Achillini, Aphrodisias, Scotus) and, among them, they mention also Contarini – considered as a supporter of Averroes. Then they observe that, even if they agree

⁶⁸ GALILEO GALILEI, *Tractatus de elementis*, p. 122. The little information about Francesco Valleriolo can be found in *Biografia medica piemontese*, dalla tipografia Bianco, Torino 1824, vol. I, p. 242–250.

⁶⁹ GALILEO GALILEI, *Tractatus de elementis*, p. 130–131. Cf. THOMAE AQUINATIS *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 76 a. 4 ad 4; *De mixtione elementorum*; ALBERTI MAGNI *Meteora*, lib. 4, t. 1, c. 1, [Aschendorff, in *Monasterii Westfalorum* 2003, p. 211]; PETRI DE ABANO *Conciliator*, d. 13 [ed. Venetiis, Luceantonii de Giunta 1520, fol. 18v–19v]; AEGIDIJ ROMANI *De generatione*, q. 19 [ed. Venetiis 1518, fol. 61r];

⁷⁰ For the class of Menu (1578) see Überlingen, Leopold-Sophien-Bibliothek, MS. 138 (*Quaestiones in philosophiam naturalem*), t. IV, s. 1, d. 1, c. 4: « Ita Albertus Magnus, secundo De generatione, tr. 2, cap. 7, et. D. Thomas, primo De generatione super t. 18, Conciliator, differentia 13, Iandunus, libro De sensu et sensibili, quaestione 25 ». More information can be found in the class of Paolo Valla (1585 ca.) in Roma, Pontificia Università Gregoriana, *Fondo Collegio*, MS. 1710, tr. V, d. 1, p. 1, q. 3: « Ita tenent [...] D. Thomas, secundo De generatione in t. 24 et primo De generatione, lect. 8, Conciliator, differentia 13, Albertus Magnus, secundo De generatione, tr. 2, cap. 7, Iandunus, De sensu et sensibili, quaestione 15 [...] ». The last authorities are exposed by the class of Rugerio (1592), now in Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, MS 62–4, fol 230v: « Haec sententia [...] Alberti hic, tr. 2, cap. 7, D. Thomas, primo De generatione 18 et secundo De generatione 6. Legite Conciliatorem, differentia, 13, Iandunum, De sensu et sensibili, quaestione 28, et quinto Physicorum, questione 4, Zimaram in Tabula [...] Contarenum in primo libro De elementis, et alios ». All these excerpts are published by WALLACE, *Galileo and his Sources*, p. 82–83; ID., *Prelude to Galileo*, p. 278.

on the general theory, however they are not unanimous on the issue of intensification. There are at least two different positions, which are represented respectively by Contarini and by Achillini: the former maintains that elementary forms grow up only from a certain level of intensity of the first qualities; the latter argues that elementary forms are present in the mixture in a minimal part and in an instant, and in a second moment they get intensity.⁷¹ At the end Menu, Valla and Galileo quickly mention a third anonymous position [*alii* – who could be the other authorities listed], which has no quotation: these last ones believe that intention and remission are altered in a second moment, due to the alteration of primary qualities.

The quotation of Contarini's position seems very interesting for the analysis of his posthumous impact. The Jesuits and Galilei united a group of authorities but then they quoted only the words of Achillini and Contarini. We can consider this choice in a double way. On the one hand, Contarini could appear so representative of that group, that his exposition seemed enough clear and comprehensive for the list of Aristotelian thinkers; thus, the professors mentioned only him. On the other hand, Contarini could appear not representative of that philosophical group, but at the same time enough interesting and 'peculiar' to merit the quotation, due to his own originality. We timidly lean toward the second possibility but, nevertheless, even in the first case we cannot but underline the relevant position assumed by Contarini in the canon of philosophical authorities of his time.

There is still one last quotation that regards Contarini, and it probably depends only on Galilei's own readings, not from the Jesuits' *reportationes*. This last quotation has nothing to do with the form of elements, but rather with their

⁷¹ For the class of Paolo Valla (conserved in Roma, Pontificia Università Gregoriana, *Fondo Collegio*, MS. 1710, tr. V, d. 1, p. 1, q. 4) see WALLACE, *Galileo and his Sources*, p. 74: « In hac tamen sententia sunt vari modi dicendi. Primus est Contarenus, qui ait formas elementorum non induci successive ad introductionem qualitatum, sed fieri alterationem usque ad eum gradum ex quo sequitur formam mixti, et sub quo formae elementorum integrae esse non possunt; tunc autem, introducta forma mixti, introducuntur etiam formae elementorum in esse refracte [...] ». For the class of Antonio Menu (1578) see WALLACE, *Galileo and his Sources*, p. 84: « Quo vero modo intenduntur et remittuntur dissentiunt inter se Averroistae. Contarenus enim dicit formas elementorum non successive introduci ad introductionem dispositionum, sed fieri alterationem usque ad talem gradum ad quem sequitur forma mixti, sub quo forma elementi conservari non possit et introducta forma mixti tum primum incipiunt formae elementorum esse in actu refracto ». Finally, see GALILEI, *Tractatus de elementis*, p. 133: « In modo vero quo formae intenduntur et remittuntur, non conveniunt. Contarenus enim dicit, formas elementorum non introduci successive ad intentionem qualitatis, sed fieri alterationem qualitatum usque ad certum gradum, ad quem sequitur forma misti et sub quo formae elementorum non possunt esse integrae; et adveniente forma misti, tum primum formae elementorum incipiunt refrangi ». Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, III, p. 46, *passim*.

movement.⁷² In his *De motu* Galileo summarizes Contarini's position on acceleration of a falling body together with Burley's: they both believe that the movement becomes more intense due to the parts of air which are touched by the body during its fall.⁷³ Burley and Contarini were not the first philosophers who introduced the analysis of the end [*finis*] as an agent of movement. A positive role for the goal in acceleration is maintained by Burley, but in accord with Thomas and Gilles of Rome. In addition, Pietro Pomponazzi attributes the same position to Averroes' commentary on *De caelo*.⁷⁴ Instead, Contarini believes that the single *ratio finis* is not enough to justify the movement, and thus he presents his multifactorial approach, which combines *ratio finis* and the role of air.⁷⁵

⁷² For a good exposition of the problem, see ANNELIESE MAIER, *An der Grenze von Scholastik und Naturwissenschaft. Studien zur Naturphilosophie des 14. Jahrhunderts*, Essener Verlagsanstalt, Essen 1943 (Veröffentlichungen des Kaiser Wilhelm- Instituts für Kulturwissenschaft im Palazzo Zuccari, Rom. Abhandlungen, 40), p. 181–219.

⁷³ GALILEO GALILEI, *Tractatus de motu*, in *Le opere di Galileo Galilei*, a cura di ANTONIO FAVARO, Firenze, G. Barbera 1968, vol. I 'Iuvenilia', p. 251–419: 411: « Burleus, super tex. 76, 8 Phys., et Contarenus, 1 lib. De elementis, tribuunt causam accelerationis motus naturalis in fine, aeris partibus, tum praecedentibus tum subsequentibus ». Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, I, p. 16 G–17 A: « Cum ergo gleba terrae deorsum descenderit, utique aerem secat, et deorsum pellit, partes vero aeris divulsae concurrunt ad terga glebae eamque vicissim deorsum pellunt: quo fit ut naturali nixui etiam hic addatur, ac propterea velocius gleba moveatur; quae item velocius mota maiore nixu aere pellit et secat; vehementius divulsi aeris partes concurrentes ad terga et plures quam priores et velocius motae, magis adhuc et magis glebam impellunt: quo fit ut citius gleba descendat parique ratione semper citius, quousque ad solum pervenerit in quo quiescit ».

⁷⁴ PIETRO POMPONAZZI, *De motu gravium et levium*, in Id., *Corsi inediti dell'insegnamento padovano*, ed. ANTONIO POPPI, Antenore, Padova 1970 (Saggi e Testi, 6), vol. II, p. 272: « Est etiam, ut ibidem recitat Commentator et in II et in IV *De caelo*, altera opinio asserens elementa moveri effective a suis locis, sicuti ferrum movetur a magnete », probably referring to AVERROIS *In De caelo*, I, comm. 81. See also THOMAE AQUINATIS *In Physic.*, lib. 7 l. 3 n. 7: « Uno modo sicut finis movet; unde et finis dicitur trahere [...]. Sic igitur magnes attrahit ferrum non solum sicut finis, sed etiam sicut movens et alterans »; AEGIDIUS ROMANI *Super Physicam*, VIII, l. xxvi, [Venetiis, per Andream de Torresanis de Asula, 26 septembris 1502; reprinted by Minerva, Frankfurt a.M. 1986, fol. 216v–217r]; GUALTIERI BURLAEI *Super Physicam*, VIII, t. 76 [Venetiis, Johannes Herbort de Almania 1482, fol. Rv–R2r].

⁷⁵ GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, I, p. 16 F–G: « Nonnulli alterari atque affici elementa putant a proprio naturalique loco: quae quo magis eo appropinquant, eo magis afficiuntur. [...] Caeterum, si ab his quaeras cur nam [...] nimirum silent neque aliquid habent, quo positionem causamque suam tueantur. Ideo dicimus nos huiusce rei plures causas esse, quae (ut reor) in unum conveniunt faciuntque motum velociorem ad finem usque ». Doing this, he agrees with AVERROIS *In De caelo*, VIII, c. 82, [1562, fol. 430 C–F]; GUALTIERI BURLAEI *Super Physicam*, VIII, t.c. 82 [ed. Venetiis, apud Petrum de Farris 1609, col. 1109]: « Intelligendum quod de ratione aeris et aquae est, quod cum impellunt a prijciente, non statim cessant a moveri quando impellens cessat a movere. Immo quiescente impellente adhuc movetur aer impulsus ab eo et ille aer impulsus impellit aliam partem aeris, et illa pars aliam partem. Partes vero aeris successive impellentes impellunt illam rem proiectam, donec perveniatur ad aliquam partem aeris ita debiliter motam quod licet impellatur et moveatur, non tamen potest ulterius movere et

IX. Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to set some reference points for the history of transmission and the success of Contarini's treatise *De elementis* in a short range of time, from the middle to the end of the sixteenth century. It doesn't expect to fulfill the usual standards of a critical edition, but it hopes, more humbly, to help a future one. In addition, a study on the transmission of the text seemed very useful also for the analysis of its success. As we have seen, the treatise circulated in manuscripts and printed editions, which sometimes diverge since they contain mistakes or different drafts of the text. The possibility to understand which one of the exemplars could be read by readers is fundamental in order to understand the reactions of intellectuals to this work. Generally, Contarini is always associated with academic Aristotelianism, since he clearly expounds the Aristotelian theory of the elements in a way faithful to the Greek philosopher. Contarini is an original and subtle expositor, and he never refuses to criticize or review a theory which seems inconsistent to him. His success depends on the clear exposition of the contents (especially concerning the movement of the sea) as well as the interpretation of Aristotle's doctrine (on the nature of the elementary form): thanks to these two aspects Contarini could get into the pantheon of Aristotelian authorities, quoted by scholars and professors against the new interpretations of natural philosophy.

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impellere rem proiectam [...] »; In this text Burley copies literally from AEGIDII ROMANI *Super Physicam*, VIII, l. xxix, fol. 222r.

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USE OF *CURSUS* IN THE WORKS OF THOMAS AQUINAS*

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Abstract

This paper is intended to prove that Thomas Aquinas used the rhetorical device of *cursus* in specific sections of texts. In those chapters where he wanted to enhance the rhetorical style – like prologues and dedications – *cursus* is frequently found. On the contrary, it is absent or at least not used intentionally in the philosophical prose, which is full of argumentation vocabulary.

Key Words

Thomas Aquinas, *Cursus*, Prose Rhythm, Literary Prologues.



One of the most recurrent rhetorical devices in Medieval works from XI–XII century onwards was *cursus*, i.e. the terminating of sentences and clauses with a rhythmic closing.¹ Especially employed in epistolography, it was concerned with the rhetorical form of the letters and used in order to enhance the prose.² *Cursus* was often accompanied by other rhetorical devices with similar aims, such as parallelism and anaphora, together with the insertion of authorial quotations. After the advent of universities, towards the end of the XII century, the new

* I would like to thank professor Andrea Aldo Robiglio, who encouraged me to undertake this research. My sincere thanks go to professor Marco Petoletti for his enlightening suggestions during various stages of this work. I also express my gratitude to two anonymous reviewers for their detailed comments.

¹ PIER VINCENZO MENGALDO, « *Cursus* », in *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma 1970, vol. II, p. 290–295.

² The latest and most comprehensive study on Medieval rhetoric is BENOÎT GRÉVIN, *Rhétorique du pouvoir médiéval: les Lettres de Pierre de la Vigne et la formation du langage politique européen (XIIIe–XVe siècles)*, Publications de l'École française de Rome, Roma 2013 (Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 339). See also ANNE-MARIE TURCAN-VERKERK, « La théorisation progressive du *cursus* et sa terminologie entre le XIe et la fin du XIVe siècle », *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi*, 73 (2015), p. 179–259; MARTIN CAMARGO, *Ars dictaminis – Ars dictandi*, Turnhout, Brepols 1991 (Typologie des sources du Moyen Age occidental, 60).

treatises of medicine, theology and philosophy – written for academic teaching – adopted a less elaborate style, characterised by simpler syntax and more technical language.³

In this context, it is interesting to examine the case of the most prominent philosopher of the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas. At the basis of my reflection there is a fundamental question: did Thomas know and use the rhetorical device of *cursus*? Even before starting a proper analysis, one could answer at least the first part of the question. Thomas lived in the XIII century, when the *ars dictaminis* was part of the literary culture: it is certain, therefore, that he had the chance to learn it during his earlier studies. But now another question arises: did Thomas use it in his work, which almost entirely has philosophical content? In order to verify the presence of *cursus* in Aquinas' production, I started my search from the prologues, since these are the most remarkable and elevated parts of his work: both their style and their rhetorical construction are complex and refined.⁴

The purpose of this contribution is to show that Thomas made use of *cursus* in specific sections of texts. Even though I provide some evidence as to the frequency of the various types of *cursus*, my approach will not be quantitative; on the contrary, I will try to show where the presence of this rhetorical technique is intentional and where it is not. Indeed, sometimes it happens that a text presents a fair amount of rhythmical *clausulae*, but this is due more to the use of fixed formulas or recurrent terms than to a specific authorial will. In order to make a comprehensive study upon this issue, a complete analysis – also with the help of statistical methods – of the immense Thomistic *corpus* would be required. Since this is not the purpose of this article, I consider inappropriate to apply a statistical approach to a small and selected portion of Aquinas' opuses. For this reason, I will not adopt the method of internal comparison developed by Tore Janson in his fundamental contribution *Prose Rhythm in Medieval Latin from the 9th to 13th Century*,⁵ but I will proceed with a 'traditional' analysis of some case studies. It is important to note that the texts which will be presented here do not

³ TERENCE O. TUNBERG, « Prose styles and *cursus* », in FRANK A. C. MANTELLO, ARTHUR G. RIGG (eds.), *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide*, The Catholic University of American Press, Washington 1996, p. 111–121: 113: « The leading teachers in the newer disciplines of medicine, theology, and canon and civil law developed a much less elaborate prose, of which the most salient feature are a technical vocabulary and a simple sentence structure that could easily conform to the requirements of dialectic. This sort of latinity became the hallmark of scientific and philosophical works in the later Middle Ages ».

⁴ For the features of the prologue in the Middle Ages cf. JACQUELINE HAMESSE (eds.), *Les prologues médiévaux*, Brepols, Turnhout 2000 (Textes et études du Moyen Age, 15); JEAN-DANIEL DUBOIS, BERNARD ROUSSEL (eds.), *Entrer en matière: les prologues*, Cerf, Paris 1998 (Patrimoines. Religions du Livres); TORE JANSON, *Latin Prose Prefaces. Studies in Literary Conventions*, Almqvist & Wiksell, Stockholm 1964 (Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Studia Latina Stockholmiensia, 13).

⁵ TORE JANSON, *Prose Rhythm in Medieval Latin from the 9th to 13th Century*, Almqvist & Wiksell, Stockholm 1975 (Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Studia Latina Stockholmiensia, 20).

belong to a particular time span but have been composed in various periods of the author's life. This implies that Aquinas' rhetorical custom was not subject to variations and, despite the passage of time, he maintained the same attitude towards the prose style.

In order to verify the presence of *cursus* in the works of Aquinas I have started my analysis by examining the opening chapters to all his works.⁶ After a broad reading of all his prologues, it is possible to recognise at least two classes of beginnings, which differ from one another in the author's intent: some of them reflect a 'literary' intent while others are involved in philosophical matters. The first group consists of prologues and dedications which often explain the work's structure and the author's intent, with a particular attention to the elevated style. The sentences are longer, the syntax more complex and the rhetorical embellishment very refined. However, the majority of his beginnings are not 'literary' prologues, where the author shows his rhetorical skills: in most of the cases the *prooemium* introduces a philosophical topic, sometimes with the help of quotations taken from the Bible or from Aristotle.

A complete analysis of Thomas' *prooemia* has revealed that in the first type of prologue the author makes use of *cursus*, while in the second one it is almost entirely absent – or at least not used intentionally.⁷ The *Summa theologiae* prologue, for instance, well represents the first 'category' of beginnings; here the author recounts the reason why he resolved to write his work: since those who approach theology for the first time risk to get lost in the matter *propter multiplicationem inutilium quaestionum*, he decided to collect *quae ad sacram*

⁶ I refer to *Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita*, Editori di San Tommaso, Roma, for *Summa Theologiae, prima pars*, vol. IV (1888); *Expositio libri Peryermenias*, vol. I (1882); *Compendium theologiae (seu Brevis compilatio theologiae ad fratrem Raynaldum)*, vol. XLII (1979); *Contra errores Graecorum*, vol. XL (1969); *Epistola ad Bernardum abbatem Casinensem*, vol. XLII (1979). For those works which are not included in the Leonine edition, I refer to THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Catena aurea in quatuor Evangelia*, ed. ANGELO GUARIENTI O.P., Marietti, Torino – Roma 1953, vol. I; ADRIANO OLIVA, *Les débuts de l'enseignement de Thomas d'Aquin et sa conception de la sacra doctrina, avec l'édition du prologue de son Commentaire des Sentences*, Vrin, Paris 2006 (Bibliothèque thomiste, 58); THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Super librum de causis expositio*, ed. HENRI D. SAFFREY, Société Philosophique, Fribourg 1954 (Textus philosophici Friburgenses, 4–5). I also adopt the corresponding handwritings.

⁷ In my analysis I have considered only the three canonical types of *cursus*, i.e. *planus*, *velox* and *tardus*: the *c. planus* is defined as the union of a paroxytone polysyllable and a paroxytone trisyllable (ex. *retributiōnem meretur*); the *c. velox* as the union of a proparoxytone polysyllable and a paroxytone quadrisyllable (ex. *iudiciū ultionis*); the *c. tardus* as the union of a paroxytone polysyllable and a proparoxytone quadrisyllable (ex. *felicitatē percipit*). MENGALDO, « *Cursus* », p. 291. On the contrary, I have not considered the *c. trispondaicus* (paroxytone polysyllable + paroxytone quadrisyllable, ex. *esse videatur*), which was not universally recognised since its use could easily be accidental. Cf. TURCAN-VERKERK, « La théorisation progressive du *cursus* », p. 181. The presence of *cursus* has been verified at the end of the clauses (*colon*) and of the sentences (*clausula*).

doctrinam pertinent in a brief and logical manner. He is not dealing with philosophical issues, but he is only presenting the circumstances of the composition of the *Summa*. In order to endow his work with a worthy beginning, Thomas not only makes use of *cursus*, but flaunts a relentless sequence of *velox*, besides some *clausulae* in *tardus* and one in *planus*. They are placed at the end of both the sentences (*clausula*) and the single clauses; nevertheless, the use of *cursus* is not perfectly regular, since not every clause-end presents a rhythmical conclusion.⁸

Quia catholicae veritatis doctor non solum provectos **debet instruere** (T), sed ad eum pertinet etiam incipientes erudire secundum illud Apostoli I ad Corinth. 3, 1: *tanquam parvulis in Christo, lac vobis potum dedi, non escam*, propositum nostrae intentionis in hoc opere est, ea quae ad Christianam religionem pertinent, eo modo tradere, secundum quod congruit ad eruditionem incipientium. Consideravimus namque huius **doctrinae novitios** (T), in his quae a diversis conscripta sunt, **plurimum impediri** (V), partim quidem propter multiplicationem **inutilium quaestionum** (V), articulorum et argumentorum; partim etiam quia ea quae sunt necessaria **talibus ad sciendum** (V*), non traduntur secundum **ordinem disciplinae** (V), sed secundum quod requirebat librorum expositio, vel secundum quod se praebebat **occasio disputandi** (V); partim quidem quia eorundem frequens repetitio et fastidium et confusionem generabat in **animis auditorum** (V). Haec igitur et alia huiusmodi **evitare studentes, tentabimus** (P + T), cum confidentia **divini auxilii** (T), ea quae ad sacram doctrinam pertinent, breviter ac dilucide prosequi, secundum quod **materia patietur** (V).⁹

It is clear that Thomas aims at embellishing the beginning of his works; besides the use of *cursus*, other rhetorical devices cooperate to elevate the style: the biblical quotation, placed in the first lines of the work; the *iterationes* (« partim quidem... partim etiam quia... partim quidem quia... »; « secundum... sed secundum quod... vel secundum quod... »); the *accumulatio* (« inutilium quaestionum, articulorum et argumentorum »; « [...] et fastidium et confusionem »). *Cursus* is here only the crowning element of a refined passage.

Aquinas employs *cursus* not only in certain prologues, but also in some of his dedications. The purpose is always the same: adorning the prose in order to elevate the style. The commentary on Aristotle's *Peri hermeneias* is dedicated to the provost of Leuven Willem Berthout: the *epistula nuncupatoria* which precedes the work is enriched by *cursus*, particularly the *velox*. The content is similar to the

⁸ *Summa Theologiae*, Prologus, p. 5.

⁹ Since I do not follow the statistical method developed by Tore Janson (which indicates the *clausulae* on the basis of the number of the syllables and the position of the accent), I have adopted a simpler reference system: P = planus; T = tardus; V = velox; * = presence of *consillabatio* (I considered *cursus* only *consillabatio* with monosyllables + polysyllables).

prologue of the *Summa*: since the matter – in this case the philosophical matter – is complex and convoluted, Thomas comes to the aid of the inexperienced scholars by commenting on Aristotle's work. Even though the passage is brief, the syntax is ample and articulate, with a preference for the hypotaxis.¹⁰

Dilecto sibi praeposito Lovaniensi frater Thomas de Aquino salutem et verae **sapientiae incrementa** (V). Diligentiae tuae, qua in iuvenili aetate non vanitati sed sapientiae intendis, **studio provocatus** (V), et desiderio satisfacere cupiens, libro Aristotelis, qui *Peri hermeneias* dicitur, multis **obscuritatibus involuto** (V), inter multiplices occupationum mearum sollicitudines expositionem **adhibere curavi** (P), hoc **gerens in animo** (T*) sic altiora pro posse **perfectioribus exhibere** (V), ut tamen iunioribus proficiendi auxilia **tradere non recusem** (V*). Suscipiat ergo studiositas tua praesentis expositionis **munus exiguum** (T), ex quo si profeceris, provocare me **poteris ad maiora** (V*).

In other occasions Aquinas uses the dedication as a 'literary space' where he shows his rhetorical skills; this happens, for example, in the dedicatory letters of the *Expositiones in Matthaëum* and in *Marcum*, part of the *Catena aurea in quatuor Evangelia*. Both letters are addressed to prominent people, respectively pope Urban IV and Annibaldo degli Annibaldi, cardinal priest of Basilica dei Santi Dodici Apostoli;¹¹ both writings are very refined, and the presence of *cursus* is constant and purposeful. The dedication to Annibaldo, after a subtle introduction, shows Thomas' important cultural project: in order to comment on the Gospel through the *auctoritates'* words, he desires to have access also to the Greek Fathers; for this purpose, he commissioned Latin translations of some of the Greek patristic works (« [...] quasdam expositiones Doctorum Graecorum in latinum feci transferri »). The entire letter is scattered with *cursus*, with the preference of the *velox* in the last sentences.¹²

Reverendo in Christo Patri Domino Hannibaldo, Basilicae duodecim Apostolorum venerabili Presbytero Cardinali, Frater Thomas de Aquino Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum se totum.

Rerum opifex Deus solo suae bonitatis intuitu cuncta in **esse producens** (P), naturalem boni amorem omnibus **indidit creaturis** (V), ut dum unaqueque res

¹⁰ *Expositio Libri Peryermeneias*, Epistola nuncupatoria, p. 5.

¹¹ Pope Urban IV had commissioned the composition of the *Catena aurea*, an accurate commentary upon the Gospels, but he died (on October 2nd 1264) before seeing the work completed. The *Expositio in Matthaëum*, in fact, is dedicated to the pope. The *Expositiones in Lucas* and in *Johannem* don't have a dedicatory letter instead, but only a prologue which is involved in the work's content. Cf. CARMELO G. CONTICELLO, « San Tommaso e i Padri: la *Catena Aurea super Ioannem* », *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 65 (1990), p. 31–92, especially p. 39–42.

¹² *Catena aurea in quatuor Evangelia*, *Expositio in Marcum*, Ad Hannibaldum, Epistola dedicatoria, p. 429.

bonum sibi conveniens naturaliter **amat et appetit** (T*), quadam conversione mirabili in suum recurrere **demonstretur auctorem** (P). Sed in hoc praefertur ceteris **rationalis natura** (P), quod ipsum universalem bonitatis fontem per sapientiam intueri potest, et per caritatis amorem **suaviter degustare** (V): unde fit ut sapientiae bonum, quo ad ipsum fontem **bonitatis accedimus** (T), omnibus humanis bonis secundum rectae rationis **iudicium praeferatur** (V). Haec est enim quae fastidium nescit: ita ut qui eam edit, adhuc esuriat, et qui eam bibit, **sitere non cesset** (P*). Haec est quae intantum **peccato repugnat** (P), ut qui secundum ipsam **operantur, non peccent** (P*). Haec est quae indeficientem fructum suis **ministri largitur** (P), ut qui eam elucidant, vitam **possideant sempiternam** (V). Praecellit itaque **voluptates dulcedine** (T), securitate **sedes et regna** (P*), utilitateque **divitias universas** (V). Huiusmodi igitur **delectatus muneribus** (T), evangelicae sapientiae a saeculis in mysterio absconditae, quam in lucem produxit Dei **Sapientia incarnata** (V), ministerium **expositionis adhibui** (T), sacrorum Doctorum **sententias compilando** (V); ad quod me induxit primitus felicitis recordationis Urbani Papae **quarti mandatum** (P). Verum quia, eo summo Pontifice ex hac **vita subtracto** (P), tria Evangelia, Marci, Lucae et Ioannis **exponenda restabant** (P), ne opus quod obedientia inceperat, negligentia **imperfectum relinqueret** (T), cum multo labore diligens adhibui studium, ut quatuor Evangeliorum **expositionem complerem** (P), eadem in omnibus forma servata in ponendis sanctorum auctoritatibus et eorum **nominibus praescribendis** (V). Et ut magis integra et continua praedicta sanctorum **expositio redderetur** (V), quasdam expositiones Doctorum graecorum in latinum **feci transferri** (P), ex quibus plura expositionibus latinorum Doctorum interserui, auctorum **nominibus praenotatis** (V). Verum quia congruit ut de laborum fructibus oblationes **sacerdotibus offerantur** (V), Expositionis evangelicae opus, laboris mei fructum, Apostolorum Presbytero **censui offerendum** (V): in quo vestra suscipiat auctoritas debitum, ut scientis industria iudicii **censuram exerceat** (T); et antiqua dilectio, amoris affectum in offerentis **munere comprehendat** (V).

As it is clear from the texts presented up until now, Aquinas reserves the use of *cursus* to those introductory passages where he presents his work and clarifies the reason and the purpose of its composition. Furthermore, the intensive use of *cursus* is marked by the greater presence of *velox*, which occurs much more frequently than *tardus* and *planus*. By the way, the upper register is often pursued through other expedients, as the articulated syntax and the presence of quotations. Even if the percentage of *cursus*, and particularly of the *cursus velox*, is lower than the previous examples, the *incipit* of the *Compendium theologiae* represents an effort to elevate the rhetorical tone, despite its theological content. The first part constitutes an introduction to the work's content, where the author illustrates three ingredients to reach the eternal salvation: knowledge of the truth, search for the just cause and respect for divine justice. The second one, with the dedication to his friend Rainaldo, explains the author's purpose, i.e. to

write a compendium of Christian theology and to elaborate on the work's structure.¹³

Eterni Patris Verbum sua immensitate uniuersa comprehendens, ut hominem per peccata minoratum in celsitudinem diuine **glorie reuocaret** (V), breue fieri uoluit nostra **breuitate assumpta** (P), non sua **deposita maiestate** (V). Et ut a celestis uerbi capessenda doctrina nullus **excusabilis redderetur** (V), quod propter studiosos diffuse et dilucide per diuersa Sacre Scripture uolumina tradiderat, propter occupatos sub breui summa humane salutis **doctrinam conclusit** (P). Consistit enim humana salus in **ueritatis cognitione** (V), ne per diuersos errores intellectus **obscuratur humanus** (P); in debiti finis intentione, ne indebitos **finis sectando** (P) a uera **felicitate deficiat** (T); in iustitie obseruatione, ne per uitia **diuersa sordescat** (P). Cognitionem autem ueritatis humane saluti necessariam in breuibus et paucis fidei **articulis comprehendit** (V); hinc est quod Apostolus ad Romanos 9, 28, dicit: *Verbum abbreviatum faciet Dominus super terram, et hoc quidem est uerbum fidei, quod predicamus*. Intentionem humanam breui **oratione rectificauit** (V), in quo dum **orare nos docuit** (T*), quo nostra intentio et spes tendere debeat ostendit. Humanam iustitiam que in legis **obseruatione consistit** (P), uno precepto caritatis consummavit; *plenitudo enim legis est dilectio*. Vnde Apostolus, ad Corinthios 13, 13, in fide, spe et caritate, quasi in quibusdam salutis nostre **compendiosis capitulis** (T), totam presentis uite perfectionem consistere docuit, dicens: *nunc autem manent fides, spes, caritas*. Vnde hec tria sunt, ut beatus Augustinus dicit, quibus colitur Deus. Vt igitur tibi, fili carissime Raynalde, compendiosam doctrinam de christiana religione tradam, quam semper pre oculis **possis habere** (P), circa hec tria in presenti opere tota nostra **uersatur intentio** (T). Ac primum de fide, secundo de spe, tertio uero de **caritate agemus** (P); hoc enim et apostolicus ordo habet, et ratio **recta requirit** (P). Non enim amor rectus esse potest nisi primo debitus finis spei statuatur, nec hoc esse potest si ueritatis cognitio desit. Primo igitur necessaria est fides, per quam **ueritatem cognoscas** (P); secundo spes, per quam in debito fine tua **intentio collocetur** (V); tertio necessaria est caritas, per quam tuus affectus **totaliter ordinetur** (V).

In spite of the complex matter, this *incipit* aims at embellishing the prose. If it is clear that *cursus* is not used as frequently as in other prologues, it is also true that it is actually present – while is it almost totally absent (or at least not deployed intentionally) in the following chapters. Moreover, the quotations are inserted in order to embellish the prose, since they confirm what Thomas says with his own words.¹⁴

¹³ *Compendium theologiae*, cap. 1, p. 83.

¹⁴ In other cases, as for example the *incipit* of the *Scriptum super Sententiis* (which will be presented later), the quotations are part of the structure of the prologue, since the author's argumentation is totally based upon the *auctoritates'* words.

However, when he delves into theological or philosophical matters, *cursus* normally becomes rarer or totally disappears. In this regard, the *incipit* of *Contra errores Graecorum*, commissioned by pope Urban IV, shows the different use of *cursus* in the three parts of the prologue. In the first and last parts of the text, where the prose is more 'narrative' and rich, *cursus* is widely present;¹⁵ in the central part, where the author explains the reasons why contemporaries are doubtful as to the message of the Greek Fathers, the sentences are less elaborate and *cursus* becomes rarer: not every *clausula* in fact is provided with a rhythmical closing. Moreover, besides some *clausulae* in *velox*, there are also many *planus*, which is the 'simplest' way to close a sentence.¹⁶

Libellum ab Excellentia vestra **mihi exhibitum** (T), Sanctissime Pater Urbane Papa, **diligenter perlegi** (P), in quo inveni quam plurima ad nostrae fidei assertionem **utilia et expressa** (V*). Consideravi autem quod eius fructus posset apud **plurimos impediri** (V) propter quaedam in auctoritatibus sanctorum **patrum contenta** (P) quae dubia **esse videntur** (P) et unde possent **materiam ministrare** (V) et contentiosis dare **occasionem calumniae** (T); et ideo, ut remota omni ambiguitate ex auctoritatibus in praedicto libello contentis verae fidei fructus **purissimus capiatur** (V), proposui primo ea quae dubia in auctoritatibus praedictis **esse videntur exponere** (T) et postmodum ostendere quomodo ex eis veritas Catholicae fidei et **doceatur et defendatur** (V*).

Quod autem aliqua in dictis antiquorum sanctorum inveniuntur quae modernis dubia **esse videntur** (P), ex duobus **aestimo provenire** (V): primo quidem quia errores circa fidem exorti occasionem dederunt sanctis Ecclesiae doctoribus ut ea quae sunt fidei maiori circumspectione traderent ad eliminandos **errores exortos** (P), sicut patet quod sancti doctores qui fuerunt ante errorem Arrii non ita expresse locuti sunt de unitate **divinae essentiae** (T) sicut **doctores sequentes** (P); et simile de aliis **contingit erroribus** (T). Quod non solum in **diversis doctoribus** (T) sed etiam in uno egregio doctore Augustino expresse apparet; nam in suis libris quos post exortam Pelagianorum haeresim edidit cautius locutus est de potestate liberi arbitrii quam in libris quos edidit ante praedictae haeresis ortum, in quibus libertatem arbitrii contra **Manichaeos defendens** (P) aliqua protulit quae in sui defensionem erroris assumpserunt Pelagiani, divinae **gratiae adversantes** (V). Et ideo non est mirum si moderni fidei doctores, post varios **errores exortos** (P), cautius et quasi elimatius loquuntur circa doctrinam fidei ad omnem haeresim evitandam. Unde si qua in dictis antiquorum doctorum inveniuntur quae cum

¹⁵ In the last lines of this prologue Aquinas gives a relevant declaration of philological method: since « multa quae bene sonant in lingua Graeca, in Latina fortassis bene non sonant », the translation of Greek texts must not be strictly literal (« indecens erit expositio si semper verbum ex verbo sumatur ») (i.e. *translatio ad verbum*), but it must restore the sense of the passage (i.e. *translatio ad sensum*). If this does not happen, the translation may not be clear and ambiguities might remain (« non est mirum si aliqua dubietas relinquatur »).

¹⁶ *Contra errores Graecorum*, Pars prior, Prologus, p. 6.

tanta cautela non dicantur quanta a **modernis servatur** (P), non sunt contemnenda aut abiicienda; sed nec etiam ea extendere oportet, sed **exponere reverenter** (V). Secundo quia multa quae bene sonant in lingua Graeca, in Latina fortassis **bene non sonant** (P*), propter quod eandem fidei veritatem aliis verbis Latini **confitentur et Graeci** (P*). Dicitur enim apud Graecos **recte et catholice** (V*) quod Pater et Filius et Spiritus sanctus sunt tres hypostases; apud Latinos autem non recte sonat si quis dicat quod sunt tres substantiae, licet hypostasis idem sit apud Graecos quod substantia apud Latinos secundum **proprietaem vocabuli** (T), nam apud Latinos substantia usitatus pro essentia accipi solet, quam tam nos quam Graeci unam in divinis confitemur; propter quod sicut Graeci dicunt tres hypostases nos dicimus tres personas, ut etiam Augustinus docet in VII De Trinitate. Nec est dubium quin etiam simile sit in aliis multis.

Unde ad officium boni translatoris pertinet ut ea quae sunt catholicae fidei transferens **servet sententiam** (T), mutet autem modum loquendi secundum proprietatem linguae in quam transfert. Apparet enim quod si ea quae litteraliter in **Latino dicuntur** (P) **vulgariter exponantur** (V), indecens erit expositio si semper verbum ex **verbo sumatur** (P); multo igitur magis quando ea quae in una **lingua dicuntur** (P) **transferuntur in aliam** (T*) ita quod verbum **sumatur ex verbo** (P*), non est mirum si aliqua **dubietas relinquitur** (V).

As said before, most of Aquinas' prologues are involved in philosophical or theological matter. In this respect, there are at least three types of beginning as regards the structure: those with quotations from *auctoritates*, those without quotations and those without a proper prologue.

Sometimes Thomas elevates his beginnings and shows his erudition through a long sequence of quotations. This happens, for example, in the prologue of the *Scriptum super Sententiis*, where the author explains the content of the four books through a relentless sequence of biblical quotations. From the very beginning, therefore, he is concentrated on complex topics and does not focus on rhetoric. He does not aim at elevating the prose through *cursus*, but at clarifying the work's structure and the reasoning behind it. *Cursus* is not totally absent: in a few cases (compared to the total number) some *clausulae* are closed by a *tardus* or a *velox*. However, the number of the rhythmical *clausulae* is very low if compared to the total. Overall, the impression is that Aquinas here worries about the content, not about the rhetorical form, and wants to be clear in order to be understood. An excessive use of *cursus*, therefore, would have become an obstacle to the comprehension of the readers.¹⁷

Ego sapientia effudi flumina: ego quasi trames aque immense de fluuio: ego quasi fluuius Dorix et sicut aqueductus exiui de paradiso. Dixi: rigabo ortum plantationum et inebriabo partus mei fructum. Eccli. 24, 40.

¹⁷ *Scriptum super primum librum Sententiarum*, Prologus, p. 303–309.

Inter multas sententias que a diuersis de **sapientia prodierunt** (V), quid scilicet esset uera sapientia, unam singulariter ueram et firmam Apostolus protulit dicens *Christum Dei uirtutem et Dei sapientiam*, qui etiam *nobis a Deo factus est sapientia*, I Cor. 1, 24 et 30. Non autem hoc ita dictum est quasi solus Filius sit sapientia, cum Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus sint una sapientia sicut **una essentia** (T), set quia sapientia quodam speciali modo Filio appropriatur, eo quod sapientie opera cum propriis Filii plurimum **conuenire uidentur** (P): per sapientiam enim Dei manifestantur **diuinorum abscondita** (T), producuntur creaturarum opera, nec tantum producuntur, set etiam restaurantur et perficiuntur – illa dico perfectione qua unumquodque perfectum dicitur prout proprium **finem attingit** (P). Quod autem manifestatio diuinorum pertineat ad Dei sapientiam patet ex eo quod ipse Deus per suam sapientiam se ipsum plene et **perfecte cognoscit** (P). Vnde si quid de **ipso cognoscimus** (T), oportet quod ex eo deriuetur, quia omne imperfectum a perfecto **trahit originem** (T). Vnde dicitur Sap. 9, 17: *Sensum tuum quis sciet nisi tu dederis sapientiam*. Hec autem manifestatio specialiter per Filium facta inuenitur: ipse enim est Verbum Patris, secundum quod dicitur Io. 1. Vnde sibi manifestatio dicentis Patris conuenit et totius Trinitatis. Vnde dicitur Mat. 11, 27: *Nemo Patrem nouit nisi Filius et cui Filius uoluerit reuelare*. Et Io. 1, 18: *Deum nemo uidit unquam, unigenitus* etc. Recte ergo dicitur ex persona Filii: *Ego sapientia effudi flumina*. Flumina ista intelligo fluxus eterne processioneis qua Filius a Patre et Spiritus Sanctus ab utroque ineffabili **modo procedit** (P). Ista flumina olim occulta et quodam modo infusa erant tum in similitudinibus creaturarum, tum etiam in **enigmatibus scripturarum** (V), ut uix aliqui sapientes Trinitatis misterium **fide tenerent** (P). Venit Filius Dei et infusa flumina quodam **modo effudit** (P), nomen Trinitatis publicando, Mat. ult. 19: *Docete omnes gentes, baptizantes* etc. Vnde Job 28, 2: *Profunda fluuiorum scrutatus est et abscondita produxit in lucem*. Et in hoc tangitur materia primi libri. Secundum quod pertinet ad Dei sapientiam est **creaturarum productio** (T). Ipse enim de rebus creatis non tantum speculatiuam, set etiam operatiuam sapientiam habet, sicut artifex de artificiatibus. Vnde Ps. 103: *Omnia in sapientia fecisti*. Et ipsa sapientia loquitur, Prou. 8, 30: *Cum eo eram cuncta componens*. Hoc etiam specialiter Filio attributum inuenitur, in quantum est ymago Dei inuisibilis, ad cuius formam omnia formata sunt. Vnde Col. 1, 15: *Qui est ymago Dei inuisibilis, primogenitus omnis creature, quoniam in ipso condita sunt uniuersa*; et Io. 1, 3: *Omnia per ipsum facta sunt*. Recte ergo dicitur ex persona Filii: *Ego quasi trames aque immense de fluuiio*; in quo notatur et ordo **creationis et modus** (P*). – Ordo, quia sicut trames a **fluuiio deriuatur** (V), ita processus temporalis creaturarum ab eterno processu personarum. Vnde in Psalmo 148, 5, dicitur: *Dixit et facta sunt*, idest Verbum genuit in quo erat ut fieret, secundum Augustinum; semper enim id quod est primum est causa eorum que sunt post, **secundum Philosophum** (T). Vnde primus processus est causa et ratio omnis sequentis processioneis. – Modus autem significatur quantum ad duo: scilicet ex **parte creantis** (P) qui, cum omnia impleat, nulli **tamen se committitur** (V*); quod notatur in hoc quod dicitur *immense*. Item ex parte creature, quia sicut trames procedit extra alueum fluminis, ita creatura procedit a Deo extra **unitatem essentie** (T), in qua sicut in alueo fluxus personarum

continetur. Et in hoc notatur materia secundi libri. Tertium quod pertinet ad Dei sapientiam est operum restauratio. Per idem enim debet res reparari per quod facta est. Vnde que per sapientiam condita sunt, decet ut per **sapientiam reparentur** (V). Vnde dicitur Sap. 9, 19: *Per sapientiam saluati sunt qui tibi placuerunt ab initio*. Hec autem reparatio specialiter per Filium facta est in quantum ipse homo factus est qui, reparato hominis statu, quodam modo **omnia reparauit** (V) que propter hominem facta sunt. Vnde Col. 1, 20: *Per eum reconcilians omnia, siue que in celis, siue que in terris sunt*. Recte ergo ex ipsius Filii persona dicitur: *Ego quasi fluuius Dorix et sicut aqueductus exiui de paradiso*. Paradisus iste gloria Patris de qua exiuit in uallem **nostre miserie** (T), non quod eam amitteret, sed quia occultauit. Vnde Io. 16, 28: *Exiui a patre et ueni in mundum*. Et circa hunc exitum duo notantur, scilicet **modus et fructus** (P*). – Dorix enim fluuius rapidissimus est, unde designat modum quo, quasi impetu quodam amoris, nostre reparationis Christus **compleuit misterium** (T). Vnde Ysa. 59, 19: *Cum uenerit quasi fluuius uiolentus, quem spiritus Domini cogit*. – Fructus autem designatur ex hoc quod dicitur: *sicut aqueductus*. Sicut enim aqueductus ex uno fonte producuntur diuisim ad fecundandam terram, ita de Christo profluxerunt diuersarum graciaram genera ad **plantandam Ecclesiam** (T), secundum quod dicitur Eph. 4, 11: *Ipse dedit quosdam quidem apostolos etc.* Et in hoc tangitur materia tertii libri, in cuius prima parte agitur de misteriis nostre reparationis, in secunda de gratiis nobis **collatis per Christum** (P*). Quartum quod ad Dei sapientiam pertinet est perfectio qua res conseruantur in suo fine. Subtracto enim fine, uanitas relinquitur quam sapientia non patitur secum. Vnde dicitur Sap. 8, 1, quod sapientia *attingit a fine usque ad finem fortiter et disponit omnia suauiter*. Vnumquodque dispositum est quando in suo fine quem naturaliter desiderat collocatum est. Hoc etiam specialiter ad Filium pertinet, qui, cum sit uerus et naturalis Dei Filius, nos in gloriam paterne **hereditatis induxit** (P). Vnde Hebr. 2, 10: *Decebat eum propter quem et per quem facta sunt omnia, qui multos filios etc.* Vnde recte dicitur *Dixi: Rigabo ortum plantationum*. Ad consecutionem enim finis exigitur preparatio, per quam omne quod fini non **competit tollatur** (P). Ita Christus etiam ut nos in finem eterne glorie induceret, sacramentorum medicamenta preparauit, quibus a nobis peccati **uulnus abstergitur** (T). Vnde duo notantur in **uerbis predictis** (P), scilicet preparatio que est per sacramenta et inductio in gloriam. – Primum per hoc quod dicit *Rigabo ortum plantationum*. Ortus enim iste Ecclesia est, de qua Cant. 4, 12: *Ortus conclusus etc.*, in qua sunt plantationes diuerse, secundum diuersos sanctorum ordines, quos omnes manus **omnipotentis plantauit** (P). Iste ortus irrigatur a Christo sacramentorum riuis, que ex eius **latere profluxerunt** (V); unde in commendationem pulchritudinis Ecclesie dicitur Num. 24, 5: *Quam pulchra tabernacula etc.* et post sequitur, 6: *Ut horti iuxta fluuios irrigui*. Et ideo etiam **ministri Ecclesie** (T), qui **sacramenta dispensant** (P), **rigatores dicuntur** (P), 1 Corinth. 3, 6: *Ego plantaui, Apollo rigauit*. – Inductio autem in gloriam notatur in hoc quod sequitur: *Et inebriabo partus mei fructum*. Partus ipsius Christi **fideles Ecclesie** (T), quos suo labore quasi mater parturiuit: de quo partu Isa. ult., 9: *Numquid ego qui alios parere facio etc.* Fructus autem istius partus sunt sancti qui sunt in Gloria, de quo fructu Cant. 5, 1: *Veniet dilectus meus in hortum etc.* Istos inebriat habundantissima sui fruitione, de qua ebrietate Ps. 35,

9: *Inebriabuntur ab ubertate domus tue*. Et dicitur ebrietas quia omnem mensuram rationis et desiderii excedit, unde Ysa. 64, 4: *Oculus non uidit* etc. Et in hoc tangitur materia quarti libri: in cuius prima parte agitur de sacramentis, in secunda de gloria resurrectionis. Et sic patet ex predictis uerbis intentio libri sententiarum.

Many other prologues are composed in the same way, as those of *Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem*, of *Expositio libri Boetii De ebdomadibus* and of *Expositio in libros Aristotelis De caelo et mundo*. In all these cases Aquinas lists a long series of quotations in order to present the topic which he is going to develop; he does not make use of *cursus* – although some rhythmical *clausulae* are present –, because he means to be clear and does not aim at adorning the text with rhetorical devices.

In other prologues Thomas is involved in the work's content, but without the help of quotations; sometimes he refers to the *auctoritates*, especially Aristotle and the Bible, but without reporting their exact words. This happens, for example, in the prologues of the commentary to the *Liber de causis*, of the *Expositio super Iob*, of the *Sententia libri Metaphysicae* and *libri Politicorum*. Also in these cases Aquinas' purpose is not to highlight a rhetorical style, and for this reason – predictably – *cursus* is almost entirely absent. The prologue of the commentary to the *Liber de causis*, for example, is mostly focused upon the work's philosophical content. In the last lines Aquinas also introduces an interesting insight about the *Liber de causis*:¹⁸ since it is a translation from an Arabic work, and since most of the arguments are already present in Proclus' *Elementatio theologica*, he must conclude that the Arabic work was an extract from Proclus' one.¹⁹

Sicut Philosophus dicit in X *Ethicorum* (*Eth. Nic.* X 7,1177 a 12–14), ultima felicitas hominis consistit in optima hominis operatione quae est **supremae potentiae** (T), scilicet intellectus, respectu optimi intelligibilis. Quia vero effectus per **causam cognoscitur** (T), manifestum est quod causa secundum sui naturam est magis **intelligibilis quam effectus** (V*), etsi aliquando quoad nos effectus sint notiores causis propter hoc quod ex particularibus sub sensu cadentibus universalium et intelligibilium causarum **cognitionem accipimus** (T). Oportet igitur quod simpliciter loquendo primae rerum causae sint secundum se maxima et optima intelligibilia, eo quod sunt maxime entia et maxime vera cum sint aliis essentiae et veritatis causa, ut patet per Philosophum in II *Metaphysicae* (*Met.* II 1, 993 b 26–31), quamvis huiusmodi primae causae sint minus et posterius notae quoad nos: habet enim se ad ea intellectus noster sicut oculus noctuae ad lucem solis quam propter excedentem claritatem perfecte percipere non potest. Oportet igitur quod ultima

¹⁸ At the time of the composition of the *Scriptum super Sententiis*, Thomas was doubtful about the authorship of this work. When William of Moerbeke translated Proclus' *Elementatio theologica* (around 1268), Aquinas could confirm his hypothesis. Cf. CRISTINA D'ANCONA-COSTA, *Recherches sur le 'Liber de Causis'*, Vrin, Paris 1995 (Études de philosophie médiévale, 72), p. 229–258.

¹⁹ *Super librum De causis expositio*, Prooemium, p. 1–3.

felicitas hominis quae in hac vita haberi potest, consistat in consideratione **primarum causarum** (P), quia illud modicum quod de eis sciri potest, est magis amabile et nobilius omnibus his quae de rebus inferioribus cognosci possunt, ut patet per Philosophum in I *De partibus animalium* (*De part. an.* I 5, 644 b 32–34); secundum autem quod haec cognitio in nobis perficitur post hanc vitam, homo perfecte beatus constituitur secundum illud Evangelii: *haec est vita aeterna ut cognoscant te Deum verum unum*. Et inde est quod philosophorum intentio ad hoc principaliter erat ut, per omnia quae in rebus considerabant, ad cognitionem primarum causarum pervenirent. Unde scientiam de primis causis **ultimo ordinabant** (V), cuius considerationi ultimum tempus suae vitae deputarent: primo quidem incipientes a logica quae modum scientiarum tradit, secundo procedentes ad mathematicam cuius etiam pueri possunt **esse capaces** (P), tertio ad naturalem philosophiam quae propter experientiam tempore indiget, quarto autem ad moralem philosophiam cuius iuvenis esse conveniens **auditor non potest** (P*), ultimo autem scientiae divinae insistebant quae considerat primas entium causas. Inveniuntur igitur quaedam de primis principiis conscripta, per diversas **propositiones distincta** (P), quasi per modum sigillatim considerantium **aliquas veritates** (V). Et in graeco quidem invenitur sic traditus liber Procli Platonici, continens CCXI propositiones, qui intitulatur *Elementatio theologica*; in arabico vero invenitur hic liber qui apud Latinos *De causis* dicitur, quem constat de arabico esse translatum et in Graeco **penitus non haberi** (V*): unde videtur ab aliquo philosophorum arabum ex praedicto libro **Procli excerptus** (P), praesertim quia omnia quae in hoc libro continentur, multo plenius et diffusius **continentur in illo** (P*). Intentio igitur huius libri qui *De causis* dicitur, est determinare de primis causis rerum. Et, quia nomen causae ordinem quemdam importat et in causis ordo ad **invicem invenitur** (V), praemittit, quasi quoddam principium totius sequentis operis, quamdam propositionem ad ordinem causarum pertinentem, quae talis est.

Finally, the third type of beginning does not possess a prologue and directly begins with the dissertation. This is the case, for example, of the *Quaestiones disputatae* and of the *Opuscula philosophica*. Of course, also in these cases *cursus* is absent.

As already shown, Aquinas is able to use *cursus* and intentionally chooses when and where to make use of it. Prologues with a literary intent are obviously more suitable places for raising the style and showing his rhetorical skills. However, in most of his works he does not worry about rhetoric, but he intends to convey philosophical or theological concepts – also using the technical lexicon of argumentation. In these cases, *cursus* would be nothing but an obstacle to comprehension. The same attitude could be observed in the body of the works: *cursus* will be present only in those few texts which aim at a refined prose; on the contrary, it will be absent in the treatises or in the commentaries, which are the overwhelming majority.

Since most of the author's opuses lack *cursus*,²⁰ I will present one of the few cases where it is intentionally used, i.e. the letter to Bernardo, abbot of Montecassino. This epistle was composed in the very last weeks of Thomas' life, in February 1274. After having refused to visit the monks of Montecassino, where he was called in order to solve some doubts about a passage written by Gregory the Great, he sent a letter to the abbot Bernardo trying to answer their questions. Although the letter deals with a difficult matter – the compatibility between foreknowledge and free will –, it is evident that Thomas aims at a sublime style: the prose is enriched by several quotations and by the constant use of *cursus* (often *velox*). Together with the reply to the duchess of Flanders, which is fully provided with *cursus* too, this letter perfectly shows that the literary intent is always associated with the rhetorical style.²¹

Reverendo in Christo patri domino Bernardo, Dei gratia venerabili abbati Casinensi, frater Thomas de Aquino suus devotus filius se fatetur ubique ad obedientiam promptum.

Preoctaueram, pater venerande, quod conuocatis illis qui ex uerbis illustris doctoris Gregorii **scandalum patiuntur** (V), satisfacerem viva uoce, set hoc prolixitas diuini officii et ieiunii **obligatio impediuit** (V); et forte fructuosum erit ut quod **Scripture mandatur** (P) non solum presentibus prodesse ualeat set posteris. Nec absque diuina dispensatione hoc gestum credo ut, me **proficiscentem in Galliam** (T*), vestrae litterae comprehenderent Aquino, ubi sanctissimi patris Benedicti beatus Maurus eius discipulus, ab eo **transmissus in Galliam** (T*), recipere meruit licteras et sacra exenia tanti patris. Vt autem dubitantibus **plenius satisfiat** (V), inserenda sunt presentibus verba beati Gregorii, que ignorantibus dubitationem **ingerunt et errorem** (V*). *Sciendum, inquit, quod benignitas Dei peccatoribus spatium penitentis largitur [...]* (*Mor. in Iob XVI c.10*). In quibus verbis satis lucide doctor lucifluus duplicem uniuscuiusque hominis considerationem **habendam determinat** (T): unam quidem secundum se, aliam vero secundum quod ad diuinam **prescientiam comparatur** (V). Secundum se quidem homo consideratus, in his scilicet que circa eum accidunt, **necessitati non subiacet** (T*); set possibile est aliqua circa **ipsum contingere** (P) quae nullatenus **sortiuntur effectum** (P), quod expresse praemittit de peccatoribus, dicens: *quia accepta tempora non ad fructum penitentiae, ad usum uero iniquitatis conuertunt quod a diuina misericordia mereri poterant amictunt*. Si ergo mereri poterant non ex **necessitate amictunt** (P). Vnde ea quae contra hominem accidunt non ex **necessitate eueniunt** (T). Eadem enim ratio est de morte et de quibuscumque aliis que homo **agit aut patitur** (T*): omnia enim diuine **prouidentie supponuntur** (V). Si uero consideretur homo diuine **prescentie comparatus** (V), ea que agit uel patitur quamdam **necessitatem incurrunt** (P): non quidem absolutam, ut omnino secundum se considerata non possint, ut dictum est, **aliter euenire** (V), set condicionalem, quia

²⁰ This is what I could infer from a sample analysis of Aquinas' works.

²¹ *Epistola ad Bernardum abbatem Casinensem*, p. 413–415.

scilicet hec condicionalis est necessaria: si Deus aliquid praescit hoc erit. Non enim possunt ista duo simul stare, aliquid esse a Deo prescitum et **illud non esse** (P*), quia sic Dei **prescientia falleretur** (V). Est autem omnino impossibile ut falsitatem **veritas patiatur** (V). Et hoc signant uerba sequentia beati Gregorii cum subdit: *quamvis omnipotens Deus illud tempus vniuscuiusque ad mortem presciat, quo uita eius terminatur; nec alio in tempore quisquam mori potuit, nisi ipso quo moritur*, scilicet quo a Deo prescitus est mori. Non enim possunt ista duo simul esse, quod Deus presciat aliquem mori quodam tempore et ipse alio **tempore moriatur** (V), alioquin Dei **scientia falleretur** (V). Secundum se autem consideratus, homo potuit alio tempore mori: quis enim dubitat eum potuisse prius transfigi gladio, igne comburi, aut precipicio aut laqueo **vitam finire** (P)? Hanc et distinctionem sapiunt eius **uerba sequentia** (T); subdit enim: *nam si Ezechie anni additi ad uitam quindecim memorantur, tempus vite creuit ab illo tempore quo mori ipse merebatur*. Stultum autem est dicere quod aliquis mereatur id quod impossibile est euenire. Ipse ergo, secundum se consideratus, poterat tempore illo mori, set divine **scientie comparatus** (V), non poterant hec simul esse, ut ipse uno **tempore moreretur** (V) et alio tempore Deus presciret moriturum <...> doctoris exprimunt quasi oculata fide dubitantium **animis ingeramus** (V), considerare oportet differentiam diuine cognitionis et humane. Quia enim homo subiacet **mutacioni et tempori** (T*), in quo prius et posterius locum habent successiue, cognoscit res quedam prius et **quedam posterius** (T); et inde est quod **preterita memoramur** (V), **videmus presentia** (T), et **prenosticamur futura** (P). Set Deus, sicut liber est ab omni motu, secundum illud Malachie: *ego dominus et non mutor* (Mal. 3: 6), ita omnem temporis **successionem excedit** (P); nec in eo inueniuntur **preteritum nec futurum** (V*), sed presentialiter omnia futura et **preterita ei assunt** (V*), sicut ipse Moysi famulo suo dicit: *ego sum qui sum* (Exod. 3:14). Eo ergo modo ab eterno presciuit hunc tali **tempore moriturum** (V) si modo nostro loquimur, cum tamen eius modo dicendum esset, videt eum mori quomodo ego video Petrum **sedere cum sedet** (P*). Manifestum est autem quod ex hoc quod video aliquem sedere, nulla ingeritur ei **necessitas sessionis** (V). Impossibile est hec duo simul esse vera, quod ego uideam aliquem sedentem et **ipse non sedeat** (T*); et similiter non est possibile quod Deus presciat aliquid esse futurum et illud non sit: nec tamen propter hoc futura ex **necessitate eveniunt** (T). Hec sunt, pater karissime, que vestrae **petitioni obediens** (T), ad errantium **reductionem conscripsi** (P); que si eis non sufficiunt ista, **rescribere uobis obediens** (P + T) non desinam.

Valeat paternitas vestra diu. Frater Raynaldus commendat se vobis.

This separation between literary genres and the consequent rhetorical choices is not new and can also be seen in further examples. When Dante in the second decade of the XIV century writes the famous epistle XIII to Cangrande della Scala, he implements the same division. The epistle, in fact, is composed of two parts: the first one is actually a real dedicatory letter directed to the lord of Verona; the second one represents an *accessus*, i.e. a thorough introduction, to the *Commedia* and particularly to the *incipit* of *Paradiso*. Since the two sections belong to two

different literary genres, style and rhetoric are also totally dissimilar: in the first one the author pays particular attention to the *ornatus* and bedecks all his *clausulae* with the use of *cursus*, which is almost absent – or at least very irregular – in the second one.²² The same attitude, as seen above, can be seen with Thomas. We can in fact appreciate how he perfectly fits his cultural environment when he adjusts his style according to the genre and thus to the content of his numerous works. He handles the difficult devices of rhetoric, but he intentionally chooses where and when to use them; the content, in short, must never be overwhelmed by the literary form.

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²² DANTE ALIGHIERI, *Le opere – Nuova edizione commentata delle opere di Dante*, vol. V: *Epistole, Egloge, Questio de aqua et terra*, ed. MARCO BAGLIO, LUCA AZZETTA, MARCO PETOLETTI, MICHELE RINALDI, Salerno, Roma 2016 (Pubblicazioni del Centro Pio Rajna), p. 276 ff.

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IN MEMORIAM

IN MEMORIAM
GUDRUN VUILLEMIN-DIEM
(16.I.1931–16.XI.2018)

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Gudrun Vuillemin was born under the name Diem on 16 January 1931 in Berlin. In her youth she saw the rise of the Nazi regime in the capital, and its eventual downfall. These events brought her and her family to post-war Cologne. She read philosophy, mathematics, and German philology at the local university. Her dissertation on Nietzsche's concepts of art was published in 1953.¹

After the completion of her PhD, she became the first collaborator at the newly established Husserl-Archive in Cologne, where she seemed to have made an overwhelming impression on its director Walter Biemel. He describes her as « die kluge, bildhübsche und elegante Gudrun Diem », only to regret that she soon left to be employed at the Thomas-Institute.²

There, she was involved in the preparation and publication of virtually all volumes that appeared in the seventies and eighties of the *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* series, the proceedings of the yearly « Kölner Mediaevistentagung ». Since her wedding with the famous French philosopher Jules Vuillemin in 1967, the volumes she edited for this series and her other works came out under her married name.

Useful though her role in the *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* was, her most important contribution to the study of medieval philosophy lies in philological work. The eminent director of the *Aristoteles Latinus* series and Oxford professor Lorenzo Minio-Paluello had noticed the recognizable talents of the young scholar – who incidentally had no formal academic training in Greek nor Latin! –, and convinced her superiors in Cologne, first Paul Wilpert and later Albert Zimmermann, to allow her to work on the edition project. Minio-Paluello guided

¹ GUDRUN DIEM, *Das Wesen der Kunst im Denken Nietzsches*, Hofmann, Schorndorf 1953.

² WALTER BIEMEL, « Zur Gründung des Kölner Husserl-Archives. Die Bedeutung eines Traumes », *Studia Phaenomenologica*, 1 (2001), p. 39–61, quote on p. 57–58.

her towards the intricate tradition of the twelfth- and thirteenth-century Greek-Latin translations of the *Metaphysica*, arguably the most widely read and studied Aristotelian treatise in the medieval period. A warm and lasting friendship based on mutual admiration developed, and Vuillemin-Diem valued his opinion until his death in 1986.

A really Herculean labour awaited Vuillemin-Diem: hundreds of medieval manuscripts were known to contain the *Metaphysica*, but there was no assessment of what the exact content of each copy was, as various Latin translations circulated and their transmissions were intertwined. Her efforts resulted in a first publication in 1970, which contained two partially preserved Latin versions, both stemming from the work of James of Venice in the first half of the twelfth century.³ Six years later, the edition of a somewhat younger, anonymously transmitted translation appeared in print.⁴

The most challenging edition became her master piece. For the version made by William of Moerbeke in the middle of the thirteenth century she succeeded in identifying the various successive stages of his work. Part of Moerbeke's text was based on a copy of the previous translation, which he revised to fit his standards and complemented with a new translation by his own hand for the missing sections.⁵ To unambiguously inform the readers of the complicated affairs within the text, Vuillemin-Diem developed a distinctive set of typographical indications that could guide them through the information contained in text and apparatuses. Although it met with serious opposition from the director of the series, Gerard Verbeke, she stuck to her concept, which eventually became the standard style sheet for editions of similarly transmitted texts.

Other aspects of Moerbeke's translation where Vuillemin-Diem's edition proved groundbreaking were her identification of the Greek manuscript that he had used as his main model, and the extremely detailed analysis of the text's transmission process in university circles in late-medieval Paris.

With the completion of these editions her academic career came to an end: she officially retired from the Thomas-Institute, but remained in very active service. By now, she had mastered William of Moerbeke's style and working method to perfection. This resulted in a further brilliant study and critical edition of his *Meteorologica* translation.⁶ Here too, she discovered several

³ GUDRUN VUILLEMIN-DIEM (ed.), *Metaphysica. Lib. I-IV.4. Translatio Iacobi sive 'Vetustissima' cum scholiis et Translatio Composita sive 'Vetus'*, Desclée De Brouwer, Bruxelles – Paris 1970 (Aristoteles Latinus, 25 1-1^a).

⁴ EAD., *Metaphysica. Lib. I-X, XII-XIV. Translatio Anonyma sive 'Media'*, Brill, Leiden 1976 (Aristoteles Latinus, 25 2).

⁵ EAD., *Metaphysica. Lib. I-XIV. Recensio et Translatio Guillelmi de Moerbeka*, 2 vols., Brill, Leiden – New York – Köln 1995 (Aristoteles Latinus, 25 3.1-2).

⁶ EAD., *Meteorologica. Translatio Guillelmi de Morbeka*, 2 vols., Brepols, Turnhout 2008 (Aristoteles Latinus, 10 2.1-2).

chronologically different layers, and followed the translator's decisions through the traces that he had left in his Greek model manuscript.

She was certainly pleased that for her editions of Moerbeke translations, the series' editorial board no longer required the use of Latin in the prefaces. In her own German mother tongue she was able to take the reader along the discoveries she had made during her editorial work and the hypotheses that resulted from it. She wrote in a very didactic and detailed way, wanting to share her train of thoughts and subjecting it to the reader's judgement. Her inclination to full disclosure of her editorial decisions resulted in extensive prefaces, which for both editions had to be confined to separate volumes. They unquestionably form models of critical analysis and its reporting.

Her struggle with the preparation of the Latin prefaces in the earlier volumes had revealed a significant feature of her character. In a letter to Lorenzo Minio-Paluello, whom she always kept up to date on the progress she made on the *Aristoteles Latinus* editions, she wrote that a Latinist colleague was helping her to bring the language of her preface to more classical level. To her mentor she admitted that she wanted to limit his interventions to a minimum: « ich will sagen können, daß ich den Teil selbst in Latein geschrieben habe ».⁷ Vuillemin-Diem was not one to shy away from a challenge, however daunting the task ahead appeared to be.

It was not the quest for personal glory that drove her in her endeavours, yet she particularly valued the opinion and the appraisal of her academic peers. Deep within her, she struggled to overcome the fear that her work somehow would not meet with the expected standards or be open to criticism. In the light of the exemplary editions that she later produced, Minio-Paluello did not strike the right tone when he reassured her that the work she had submitted to him was good enough for publication, « if the *Aristoteles Latinus* texts are to appear before our generations have passed, and the interest in these things have vanished ».⁸

The author of the present obituary remembers how she had a long phone call about another project – this would be her final one, she pledged! – that she wanted to embark upon. Fernand Bossier, whose work she particularly valued, had not been able to finish the edition of Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* in the translation by William of Moerbeke, which he had identified together with his student Luc Anthonis. Would she be able to meet with Bossier's intended aims, and would she herself see it finished? After our call – and there must have been many others! –

⁷ Letter to Lorenzo Minio-Paluello, undated, likely January 1976 (underlining from the original typescript). Copies and drafts of her correspondence with Minio-Paluello and others are preserved in the *Aristoteles Latinus* archive.

⁸ Letter from Lorenzo Minio-Paluello, dated 26 October 1967.

she decided to accept the challenge. She completed her last critical edition in collaboration with Carlos Steel and with the help of Pieter De Leemans in 2015.⁹

Even then, well within her life's ninth decade, she remained active and inquisitive, always looking for loose ends where she might be able to provide better, and often definitive, answers. It resulted in her last, posthumously published study with Fabio Acerbi, in which she unravels in great detail William of Moerbeke's use of a particular Greek manuscript, and meticulously paints the events concerning the papal library in the thirteenth century, from which it is one of the rare survivors.¹⁰ The book will be a lasting reference point, as are her previous publications about two translators from the twelfth century, and a commentator who lived in the next. Her article about Burgundio of Pisa's translation activity and his use of an important collection of Greek manuscripts forms an landmark in the field of translation studies.¹¹ In her article of nearly monography length about David of Dinant she deconstructs the mysteries that had surrounded this scholar and proves beyond doubt that he was a gifted translator with a direct access to valuable Greek source texts.¹² And her attribution of an anonymous commentary on Aristotle's *Meteorologica* to Mahieu le Vilain, who was previously only known as the author of a French translation of the text, opened up new aspects of the latter's learning.¹³

While Gudrun Vuillemin-Diem was so good in assessing the impact of others' work, in particular the late medieval translators', she was not able to fully appreciate the importance of her own output, as a fatalistic and slightly melancholic aside in a letter to Minio-Paluello documents: « und wenn man im Grabe liegt, dann interessiert es sowieso keinen mehr ».¹⁴ On this particular point, history has proved her wrong: the stellar quality of her life's achievements set the standards which other editors of medieval Latin translations must aim for as their targets, in the modest awareness that they are unlikely to ever reach them.

⁹ GUDRUN VUILLEMIN-DIEM, CARLOS STEEL, PIETER DE LEEMANS, *Ptolemy's Tetrabiblos in the Translation of William of Moerbeke. Claudii Ptolemaei Liber Iudicialium*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2015 (Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, De Wulf-Mansion Centre. Series 1, 19).

¹⁰ FABIO ACERBI, GUDRUN VUILLEMIN-DIEM, *La transmission du savoir grec en Occident. Guillaume de Moerbeke, le Laur. Plut. 87.25 (Thémistius, in De an.) et la bibliothèque de Boniface VIII*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2019 (Mediaevalia Lovaniensia. Series 1, Studia 49).

¹¹ GUDRUN VUILLEMIN-DIEM, MARWAN RASHED, « Burgundio de Pise et ses manuscrits grecs d'Aristote. Laur. 87.7 et Laur. 81.18 », *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales*, 64 (1997), p. 136–198.

¹² GUDRUN VUILLEMIN-DIEM, « Zum Aristoteles latinus in den fragmenten der Quaternuli des David von Dinant », *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 70 (2003), p. 27–136.

¹³ EAD., « Anonymus Normannus (Mahieu le Vilain): *Super Meteora* II.9–III. Identifizierung des Autors, zur Eigenart des Textes, mit einer Edition von zwei Kapiteln der noch unveröffentlichten Schrift », *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales*, 71 (2004), p. 1–130.

¹⁴ Letter to Lorenzo Minio-Paluello, dated 4 December 1978.

IN MEMORIAM
PIETER DE LEEMANS
(20.XI.1973–13.IV.2019)

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On Saturday April 13, 2019, Prof. Dr. Pieter De Leemans passed away in Ghent (Belgium) at the age of 45, after a brave fight against cancer. Pieter De Leemans was professor at the University of Leuven, academic Secretary of the *Aristoteles Latinus* project, and Secretary General of the Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Philosophie Médiévale (SIEPM).

Pieter De Leemans was born in Aalst on November 20, 1973. He registered as a student at the University of Leuven, where he chose to study Classics and History at the faculty of Arts, with a specialization in postclassical Latin. For his PhD, he was active at the De Wulf-Mansion Centre for Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy at the same University, where he worked with enthusiasm under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Jozef Brams. He wrote his dissertation within the framework of the *Aristoteles Latinus* project on Aristotle's *De incessu animalium* and *De motu animalium* in the Middle Ages. This project, which would continue to be a very important part of Pieter De Leemans's career, perfectly reflects his research interests, aiming to critically edit all medieval Latin translations of these texts from Aristotle's Greek. His continued work on these two Aristotelian treatises on animal motion, requiring research stays abroad and an extensive re-examination of the manuscript tradition, resulted in the publication of two impressive and meticulous volumes in the *Aristoteles Latinus* series in 2011: *De motu animalium. Fragmenta Translationis Anonymae* (XVII 1.III) and *De progressu animalium. De motu animalium. Translatio Guillelmi de Morbeka* (XVII 2.II-III).

During his time as a postdoctoral research assistant, he was active at both the De Wulf-Mansion Centre and the Institute of Medieval and Renaissance Studies at the University of Leuven, and in that connection he taught several courses, such

as Latin Paleography, Codicology, Editing of Medieval and Renaissance Texts, and Medieval Philosophical Texts.

After having worked several years as part of the *Aristoteles Latinus* project, Pieter De Leemans became its academic Secretary in 2003. This position, previously held by Jozef Brams, entailed his providing scientific and administrative assistance to the international team of editors, as well as coordinating the project more generally.

In 2010, Pieter De Leemans's philologically-based research led to his involvement in the creation of LECTIO (Leuven Centre for the Study of the Transmission of Texts and Ideas in Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance), a research center that focuses on the study of the intellectual history of pre-modern European thought and its texts, bringing together researchers from the faculties of Arts, Theology and Religious Studies, Law, and Philosophy. He was not just a member of LECTIO, but a driving force in it, sitting on its executive committee for many years, helping with the organization of numerous conferences and workshops, and supporting a number of large research grants. The interdisciplinarity – which is the entire idea behind LECTIO – fits beautifully with his own background in Classics, History, Philosophy, and his overall academic curiosity.

Moreover, from 2012 onwards, he held an appointment as professor at the De Wulf-Mansion Centre, and after being a member (2001) and then a board member (2012) of the SIEPM, Pieter De Leemans also became General Secretary of SIEPM in 2017 – only a few months prior to learning of his illness.

But Pieter – he urged his students to call him by his first name from the very first day – was much more than an enumeration of achievements. Behind those facts lay a person and colleague with a pleasant and vibrant personality with whom I had the honor and pleasure to work during my doctoral research.

First and foremost he was one of the most passionate researchers I've ever met. The number of ideas that sprang into his head every second was unbelievable. He was also very generous with these ideas as he helped with devising and formulating several research topics of others and unselfishly stimulated others to take new research directions. The projects on which he enthusiastically brainstormed, mainly projects focusing on medieval Greek-Latin translations, on the concept of movement in medieval natural philosophical texts, and on medical terminology in the Middle Ages, were often granted. Pieter was insatiably curious and creative, with an ability to comb out texts and manuscripts right down to the last detail. His joy upon discovering a new manuscript or an unknown medieval commentary had no equal.

His passion for research reveals itself in the many conferences that were organized under his direction – such as on the topic of Pietro d'Abano, on the *Problemata physica*, on medieval translators such as Bartholomew of Messina – as

well as in the volumes that resulted from these colloquia. His articles were models of in-depth research, well thought-out argumentation and convincing scientific discourse. Up until his last months, Pieter continued working on articles and helped organizing the 2018 annual colloquium of the SIEPM, where he unfortunately could not be present – all signs of his incessant enthusiasm and energy for his work.

Anyone who ever attended one of his academic lectures, or who heard him teach, will acknowledge that he was bursting with energy on these occasions. Pieter was known for his spontaneous and, at times, slightly chaotic way of talking; it was almost impossible for him to stand still. He preferred to walk around when sharing his knowledge with his audience – as much as possible.

Those who worked with him, will certainly remember his dark and self-deprecating sense of humor. He occasionally wondered what influence his work might have, being well aware of the fact that we would not save lives with our studies on medieval manuscripts; Pieter was very down-to-earth and good at putting things into perspective. He may never have realized how much his work and his personality influenced others, and how he touched the hearts of whoever had the opportunity to work with him. Many colleagues have described him as an excellent and passionate researcher, who was also fabulous to work and discuss with, possessing the rare combination of professionalism, humor and kindness.

But Pieter was so much more than just an academic. He had a great liking for the opera, was a skilled painter, and loved fine dining with carefully selected wines. He organized lively parties (his renowned yearly Christmas menu required careful planning weeks in advance) where his friends and loved ones could mingle. He had a great love for Ibiza, where he spent his yearly vacation. And there was so much more.

He lived a passionate life, and touched the lives of many others. He will be warmly remembered as a passionate and loyal colleague, an excellent scholar and a dear friend.

He will be dearly missed.

NOTES

FROM THE LINER VULCANIA TO THE MARTIN MEMORIAL LECTURES: PAUL OSKAR KRISTELLER'S FIRST FIFTEEN YEARS IN AMERICA *

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In his *Life of Learning* lecture at the annual meeting in 1990 of the American Council of Learned Societies, Paul Oskar Kristeller compared his life to the horseman who looked back after having climbed up on the shore of Lake Constance only to see dissolving behind him the lake ice that he himself had just crossed.¹ Well could he make such an analogy. In the early 1930s Kristeller left Nazi Germany for Italy, although up to that point in time he had been preparing for an academic career in Germany. Then, on 23 February 1938 he landed in New York on the liner Vulcania having left Fascist Italy eleven days earlier.² He

* This is the talk I delivered at the workshop *The Renaissance in Exile: German Renaissance Scholars in Europe and North America (1930–2000)* at the Lichtenberg-Kolleg, Göttingen, on 16 May 2019.

¹ He was alluding to, though not quite accurately, the ballad *Der Reiter über den Bodensee* of Gustav Schwab (1792–1850), which seems to have been read by every educated German speaker at school. See WOLFGANG MIEDER, *Aphorismen, Sprichwörter, Zitate von Goethe und Schiller bis Victor Klemperer*, Peter Lang, Bern 2000 (Sprichwörterforschung, 22), p. 55–93. For instance, the tale is alluded to by the writer and Soviet spy G. F. ('GUSTI') STRIDSBERG (1892–1978) in her memoir, *My Five Lives: An Autobiography*, trans. ARNOLD J. POMERANS, Heinemann, London 1963, p. 263; by the Auschwitz survivor RUTH KLUGER in her *Still Alive: A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered*, Feminist Press, European Classics Edition, New York 2012 (first edition 2001), p. 184–185; by the psychologist KURT KOFFKA (1886–1941) in his *Principles of Gestalt Psychology*, Harcourt Brace, New York 1935, p. 27–28; and by Kristeller's fellow refugee and student of Heidegger, HANNAH ARENDT (1906–1975), in her *The Promise of Politics*, intr. and ed. JEROME KOHN, Schocken Books, New York 2006, p. 193.

² In his *Reminiscences* (Columbia University, Oral History Archives), Kristeller wrongly claims that he sailed on the Vulcania's sister ship, the Saturnia: (p. 360) « Then I departed from Naples on February 12th 1939 on the Italian steamboat *Saturnia*. The boat trip lasted 11 days, with landings in Algiers – where I did go ashore and saw the Casbah – and in Gibraltar and the Azores ». Kristeller's boat ticket on the Vulcania survives among his papers in Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Paul Oskar Kristeller Papers (henceforth POKP), Box 77, folder 6. We also

genuinely had wanted to become an Italian citizen and up to less than a year before had every hope of continuing his scholarly career in Italy.³ What he could not know at the time while enduring both exiles was that he was escaping the catastrophic effects of the impending Holocaust and World War II in his country of birth and in his second, as he then thought, homeland for the safe,⁴ but to him quite foreign, harbor of America, where he would spend the remaining sixty years of his life.⁵

have the manifest of 'alien' passengers on the *Vulcania* for the voyage dated the day he boarded the ship in Naples, 12 February 1939; Kristeller is no. 21 in the list, where his family name at birth, Gräfenberg, is also given (I downloaded the manifest from Ancestry.com, NYT715 6287-0410). HANS PETER OBERMAYER, *Deutsche Altertumswissenschaftler im amerikanischen Exil: Eine Rekonstruktion*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2014, p. 492, quotes Kristeller's letter to his parents on 29 January 1939 telling them that he was sailing on the *Vulcania*. Cf. the voyage on the *Vulcania* later that same year, likewise caused by Mussolini's racial laws, of the future Reformation scholar and friend of Kristeller's, the then seven-year old JOHN TEDESCHI, in his (with ANNE C. TEDESCHI) *Italian Jews Under Fascism, 1938-1945*, Parallel Press – University of Wisconsin – Madison Libraries, Madison, WI, 2015, p. 1-2. Tedeschi also points out Kristeller's error in ID., « Paul Oskar Kristeller: The Italian Years, 1933-1939 », in DEANNA SHEMEK, MICHAEL WYATT (eds.), *Writings Relations. American Scholars in Italian Archives. Essays for Franca Petrucci Nardelli and Armando Petrucci*, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze 2008 (Biblioteca dell'Archivum Romanicum. Serie 1. Storia, letteratura, paleografia, 347), p. 191-217, at p. 214, fn. 79.

³ On the effort and expectation of gaining Italian citizenship for Kristeller, see TEDESCHI, « Kristeller: The Italian Years », 210-204; OBERMAYER, *Deutsche Altertumswissenschaftler*, p. 438-442, 451-459. There is only a brief reference in KRISTELLER, *Reminiscences*, p. 274-275. However, a letter he wrote Cardinal Giovanni Mercati on 29 March 1937 shows that he put considerable thought into the attempt: « Ora i miei amici mi hanno consigliato di far domanda per ottenere la cittadinanza italiana. È questa una decisione molto grave, perché non si dimentica così facilmente il proprio paese nativo [...] Ma dopo che il governo tedesco mi ha tolto quasi tutto ciò che l'arbitrio degli uomini può togliere e dopo che in parecchi anni di soggiorno ho approfondito sempre di più i miei rapporti personali ed intellettuali coll'Italia, ho preso quella decisione [...] mi trovo perfino nella situazione paradossale che, essendo suddito tedesco [...] non posso andare in Germania per salutare i miei genitori, mentre come suddito straniero lo potrei fare senz'altro » (PAOLO VIAN, « L'opera del card. Giovanni Mercati per gli studiosi perseguitati per motivi razziali. L'appello alle Università Americane [15 dicembre 1938] », in *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae*, 9 [= *Studi e Testi*, 409], Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 2002, p. 427-500, at p. 473).

⁴ In an interview in *Sant'Anna News. Newsletter dell'Associazione Ex-Allievi Scuola Superiore S. Anna - Pisa*, 4 (Dec. 1994), p. 18-20, on p. 18, he declared: « Sentivo l'Italia come la mia seconda patria ». See also JOHN MONFASANI, « Italy in the Career of Paul Oskar Kristeller », in ANDREA ALBRECHT, LUTZ DANNEBERG, SIMONE DE ANGELIS (eds.), *Die akademische Achse Berlin-Rom? Der wissenschaftlich-kulturelle Austausch zwischen Italien und Deutschland 1920 bis 1945*, De Gruyter Oldenbourg, Berlin 2017, p. 83-103, p. 83, fn. 1.

⁵ Kristeller would always commemorate the day of his arrival. For instance, in a letter of 20 February 1964 to Roland and Ruth Bainton, Kristeller began: « On February 23, it will be exactly 25 years since I first came to this country. On this occasion, I should like to thank you for all your help and kindness with which you managed to bring me over, out of a most difficult situation » (POKP, Box 3, folder 2; photocopy of the original in the Roland Bainton Papers, Yale Divinity School). On Bainton's pivotal role in rescuing Kristeller from Italy in 1939, see fn. 7 below.

An anecdote told me many years ago suggests how traumatized Kristeller was by his expulsion from Italy.⁶ When the Vulcania docked in New York, one of the sponsors of Kristeller's non-quota visa, Hermann Weigand, and his wife were there to greet him and take him by car to their home outside of New Haven, Connecticut.⁷ During the ride Kristeller remained silent. Upon entering the Weigand's home he saw their piano, headed straight for it, and played for an hour or more. Then, and only then, could he open up and speak freely with his hosts. A talented pianist who once toyed with the idea of turning professional and who often played for his teacher Marin Heidegger and his family in their home,⁸ Kristeller practiced daily all through his school years in Germany and continued to do so in Italy, using the piano of the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa, where he taught and lived.⁹ Only in 1945, right after World War II, did he stop, when the press of work made him decide that he no longer had the time for this obviously deeply satisfying exercise.¹⁰ On the day of his arrival in America in February 1939,

⁶ This was told to me by the classicist Berthe Marti at dinner one evening at the American Academy in Rome in the fall of 1969.

⁷ See KRISTELLER, *Reminiscences*, p. 362–363. On the background to the efforts of Weigand, Roland Bainton, and others to bring Kristeller to America, see OBERMAYER, *Deutsche Altertumswissenschaftler*, p. 461–501; and JOHN TEDESCHI, *The Correspondence of Roland H. Bainton and Delio Cantimori, 1932–1966: An Enduring Transatlantic Friendship between Two Historians of Religious Toleration*, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze 2002 (*Studi e Testi per la Storia della Tolleranza in Europa nei secoli XVI–XVIII*, 6), p. 90–105.

⁸ See KRISTELLER, *Reminiscences*, p. 66: « I must say that in my younger years music played such an important role in my life that there were moments when I was not doing well in my studies, that I played with the idea of becoming a professional musician. But it didn't come to that, and I don't think I regret it. I think I made the right choice in the long run. But it was a great temptation ». For Kristeller's playing for Heidegger, see *ibid.*, p. 62, 109, 165; and *Id.*, with MARGARET L. KING, « Iter Kristellerianum: The European Journey (1905–1939) », *Renaissance Quarterly*, 47 (1994), p. 907–929, at p. 917. When Kristeller and Heidegger resumed contact in 1970s, they both mentioned this piano playing at Heidegger's house; see JOHN MONFASANI, « Paul Oskar Kristeller and His German Professors », forthcoming in *Parola del Passato. Rivista di studi antichi*, at fn. 55 and 56.

⁹ See KARL-EUGEN GASS, *Diario Pisano, 1937–1938*, trans. GIOVANNA CERMELLI, annot. MALIS INGENMEY, intr. MARIANELLO MARIANELLI, Nistri Lischì, Pisa 1989, p. 21–22. See also *ibid.*, p. 108–109, where Gass, who died on the Western Front in 1944 after being called into the German military, describes a long philosophical discussion he had with Kristeller on an evening walk in Pisa. In a letter of 1989, Kristeller wrote Marianelli: « Serbo un ricordo vivo del Gass giovane studioso serio, ingegnoso e simpatico che ho conosciuto alla Scuola Normale nel 1937 e 1938 e con cui ho avuto molte conversazioni interessanti » (p. xxix, fn. 36). The original German publication, KARL-EUGEN GASS, *Pisaner Tagebuch. Aufzeichnungen / Briefe aus dem Nachlass eines Frühvollendeten*, ed. PAUL EGON HÜBNER, Verlag Lambert Schneider, Heidelberg – Darmstadt 1961, does not identify Kristeller as the person whom Gass refers to as « Ch ». In the German text the passages cited above are on p. 22–23 and 92–93.

¹⁰ KRISTELLER, *Reminiscences*, p. 63: « but then after the end of the war I got involved in so many time consuming research projects that I could never any longer spare the time to practice. So my ability declined, and finally I got so tired of my reduced ability that I dropped it altogether ». In a letter of 8 December 1995 to W. Cameron McEwan (POKP, Box 35, folder 6), Kristeller related that

however, playing the piano helped him to settle his nerves and regain his composure.

Little could Kristeller have realized that day that he was about to embark on the most creative and productive fifteen years of his life.¹¹ Indeed, one could argue that the remaining forty-five years of his life were nothing more than the fulfillment of the scholarly projects he had commenced in those first fifteen years, 1939–1954, as the greatness of his scholarship became ever more recognized and influential.

Some of what Kristeller first accomplished in America was a consequence of his Italian years. He completed in Italy his still standard monograph on the philosophy of Marsilio Ficino,¹² but saw it published for the first time in America in an English translation in 1943.¹³ Furthermore, he had conceived in his last years in Italy the project that would become the *Iter Italicum*, but without having a real sense of its vastness or knowing what to call it.¹⁴ In June 1945, Leonardo Olschki, another refugee European exile,¹⁵ writing from Berkeley, California, sent Kristeller a postcard to alert him that Fritz Saxl of the Warburg Institute was now in New York. Kristeller did meet with Saxl in New York and that meeting marked the formal start of *Iter Italicum*.¹⁶ As Kristeller memorialized in the preface to

« My activity as a pianist stopped in 1945 when I was no longer able to practice two hours each day ». He had already said the same in a letter of 25 April 1994 to McEwan.

¹¹ Rightly GIUSEPPE VELLI, « Paul Oskar Kristeller: una vita per gli studi », in *Gli studi umanistici e l'opera di Paul Oskar Kristeller*, Milano, 18 maggio 2000, Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere, Milano 2001, p. 7–15, at p. 7, remarked: « È infatti straordinaria la quantità di lavoro svolto da Kristeller nei suoi primi dieci-quindici anni americani ».

¹² It is worth noting that the doctorate Kristeller received from the University of Pisa in 1937 had nothing to do with his work on Ficino; see KRISTELLER, *Reminiscences*, p. 273: « Actually in 1937 I received a diploma from the University of Pisa, and I did not have to pass any examinations, and I did not have to submit any new dissertation, but they gave a degree as a kind of Italian validation of my German degree [...] signed by King Vittorio Emanuele II also as Emperor of Ethiopia ».

¹³ For the gestation and history of this study of Ficino see JOHN MONFASANI, « Italy in the Career », p. 85–87; KRISTELLER, *Reminiscences*, p. 287–288, 517–520; and the preface to the definitive edition: PAUL OSKAR KRISTELLER, *Il pensiero filosofico di Marsilio Ficino. Edizione riveduta con bibliografia aggiornata*, Casa Editrice Le Lettere, Firenze 1988, p. XIX–XX.

¹⁴ MONFASANI, « Italy in the Career », p. 88–90.

¹⁵ See ANKE DÖRNER, *La vita spezzata. Leonardo Olschki: ein jüdischer Romanist zwischen Integration und Emigration*, Stauffenburg Verlag, Tübingen 2005 (Romanica et Comparatistica, 38).

¹⁶ In POKP, Box 50, folder 5; the postcard is dated 14 June 1945. In the *Reminiscences*, p. 558–562, Kristeller talks about his meeting with Saxl and the start of the project, but misdates the meeting to the spring of 1945. There is an extensive correspondence between Kristeller and Saxl in POKP and in the Archive of the Warburg Institute, London, that should be published. Kristeller first contacted Saxl with a two-page handwritten letter of 11 March 1937 introducing himself by rehearsing his scholarly record and proposing « a sort of bibliographic *Handbuch* » of the manuscript and bibliographic material he had collected on humanism. Saxl responded on 16 March, saying that such a « lange formelle Einführung » was really unnecessary and expressing interest in Kristeller's *Handbuch*. The conversation changed in September 1937 to how to rescue

volume I of the *Iter*: « When I met the late Fritz Saxl in 1945, I told him of my material, and it was thanks to his foresight and interest that the plan of the present work emerged and took pretty much its final shape ».¹⁷ So the *Iter* as a publication originated in New York in 1945. Finally, in 1944, he published in the new American journal *Traditio* a ground-breaking article on the scholastic background of Marsilio Ficino based on texts he had discovered in Italy shortly before being forced to leave in 1939.¹⁸ Thus, by leveraging his prior Italian scholarship, Kristeller had, by the mid-1940s, successfully transformed himself into a major Anglophone scholar.

But the relationship also worked in the other direction. The challenges and stimuli of his new American environment also altered Kristeller and his scholarship in decisively important ways. I count at least five.

First, Kristeller came to America as an expert on Renaissance Platonism. His study of Marsilio Ficino first took shape at Freiburg under Martin Heidegger and was completed at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa. This study of Marsilio Ficino was itself a logical progression from Kristeller's first major publication, a study of Plotinus, the founder of Neoplatonism, in 1928. Indeed, Kristeller escaped Fascist Italy in 1939 precisely because he was an expert on Neoplatonism, having been given a non-quota visa to come to America to teach a seminar on Plotinus at Yale University.¹⁹ But once arrived in Columbia University from Yale in the summer of 1939, Kristeller met up with John Herman Randall, who was enthusiastically studying the Aristotelianism of the University of Padua in the sixteenth century, and then Ernest Moody, who would soon become famous for his book on the logic of William of Ockham.²⁰ Kristeller had first seriously

Kristeller after Mussolini's racial laws. Kristeller's first written response to the meeting in New York in the summer of 1945 was a letter of 27 August 1945 expressing satisfaction at finally meeting Saxl and saying he would like « to take advantage of your kind offer concerning my *Iter Italicum* ».

¹⁷ PAUL OSKAR KRISTELLER, *Iter Italicum: A Finding List of Uncatalogued or Incompletely Catalogued Humanistic Manuscripts of the Renaissance in Italian and Other Libraries*, 7 vols., Warburg Institute – E. J. Brill, London – Leiden 1963–1997, vol. I, p. xi.

¹⁸ One of the editors of *Traditio*, Stephan Kuttner, wrote two letters to Kristeller from Washington, DC, on 13 October 1943, one a typed formal letter in English and another an informal handwritten letter in German, in the former of which he reported: « When I last saw you here in Washington, we informally discussed the possibility of your contributing an article to *Traditio*, vol. II (1943). At that time you told me that you had some unpublished Ficinian texts which you would like to edit [...] I wish to make clear by the present letter that the editors of *Traditio* should be extremely glad to have this article » (POKP, Box 32, folder 1). The article « The Scholastic Background of Marsilio Ficino. With an Edition of Unpublished Texts » appeared in *Traditio*, 2 (1944), p. 257–318 (= THOMAS GILBHARD, *Bibliographia Kristelleriana: A Bibliography of the Publications of Paul Oskar Kristeller, 1929–1999*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma 2006, p. 12, no. 69).

¹⁹ See fn. 7 above.

²⁰ See JOHN MONFASANI, « Paul Oskar Kristeller and Philosophy », *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale*, 57 (2015), p. 383–413, at p. 385–386; and Id., « Italy in the Career », p. 92–94.

encountered medieval scholasticism when he briefly was in limbo between the time he had been expelled from the Scuola Normale in the summer of 1938 and was able to leave for America in February 1939. He fortunately had been hired by the Vatican to help with the cataloging of scholastic manuscripts and was guided in this new intellectual field by Auguste Pelzer.²¹ By the early 1940s in America Kristeller had become a passionate student of Italian scholasticism and of the greatest of the Italian scholastics, Pietro Pomponazzi. So committed had Kristeller become to these new endeavors that he set out to write an intellectual history of the Italian universities, all the while living without a secure job, producing an amazing number of studies, talks, and reviews, and working frantically to get his parents out of Nazi Germany.²² In the event, Kristeller never wrote the promised book on the Italian universities, the only major project in his

²¹ See MONFASANI, « Italy in the Career », p. 91

²² Kristeller first tried to extract his parents from Germany via Italy; see TEDESCHI, « Kristeller: The Italian Years », p. 214–215, who proves that in 1940 Kristeller's Italian patron, Giovanni Gentile, successfully got Mussolini to grant Kristeller's parents an exceptional visa, but by the time they tried to take advantage of the privilege in June 1940, it had been withdrawn. Tedeschi drew his documentation from the Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome. POKP Box 65, folder 8, contains a letter of 1 May 1940 from the Ministro degli Affari Esteri to Gentile telling him that the order for the desired *disposizioni* had been forwarded that very day to the *Consolato Generale* in Berlin. Tedeschi, p. 215, quotes Bainton as saying in December 1940 after these events that « [Kristeller] is still too distraught by efforts to help friends and relatives to settle down again to any major production ». The same folder contains a letter of Julius Kurz to Kristeller of 26 March 1940 recounting how he had visited his parents in Berlin and recommending that visas be sought from Brasil, Mexico, or Panama. Kristeller investigated obtaining a visa from other countries, including Sweden, but decided on Cuba as the most feasible. The same folder contains the documentation. He paid \$1,500 for the visa and \$800 to a travel agent to bring his parents to Cuba (the folder contains a typed list in five columns of seven friends who pledged \$750 in total towards these costs; four of whom actually made the pledged loans and, as recorded in the final column, were repaid by Kristeller). But on 9 June 1942 Ella Dekuczynski in a notarized memorandum reported that she talked to Kristeller's father Heinrich in Berlin on 15 May, who told her that the Cuban visa application had been rejected (see Appendix 1). The folder contains several letters showing Kristeller attempting in vain to recover the money he had spent on the rejected visa. But the worst news only arrived in 1945 with a letter of 8 June from the U. S. Department of Justice that the visa preference status for his parents has been revoked because they had died in Theresienstadt in 1943. A letter from the American Red Cross of 23 July confirmed that they had died. In the *Gedenkbuch. Opfer der Verfolgung der Juden unter der nationalsozialistischen Gewaltherrschaft in Deutschland 1933–1945*, 2 vols., Frankfurt a. M., 1986, vol. I, p. 784, Heinrich Kristeller is reported as having died on 3 December 1942, and Alice Kristeller, née Magnus, in March 1943. *Theresienstädter Gedenkbuch. Kie Opfer der Judentransporte aus Deutschland nach Theresienstadt, 1942–1945*, Institut Theresienstädter Initiative im Verlag Academia, Prague 2000, p. 114, agrees on Heinrich date of death and fixes Alice's as 19 March 1943. Both are also recorded in *Gedenkbuch Berlins des jüdischen Opher des Nationalsozialismus*, Edition Hentrich, Berlin 1995, p. 882. See also TEDESCHI, « Kristeller: The Italian Years », p. 216.

very long life that he failed to see through to the end.²³ But his research in preparation for the never completed monograph had several consequential results. He published four articles on Pomponazzi, including an edition of two previously unknown texts of Pomponazzi.²⁴ His publication of original studies on Italian Renaissance scholasticism, Aristotelianism, and universities amounted to something like twenty-two separate items (not counting reprints and translations), including several ground-breaking studies on the medical school of Salerno and Petrarch's relationship with scholasticism as well as articles on the structure and curriculum of Italian universities and on those much debated designations, Italian Averroism and Alexandrism.²⁵ Thus, justly and with authority he could include a chapter on Pomponazzi and Italian universities in his highly successful manual, *Eight Philosophers of the Italian Renaissance*, not to speak of his classic study of Thomism in the Italian Renaissance.²⁶ Not by chance

²³ In the end the projected resulted in PAUL F. GRENDLER, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 2002. For the convoluted history of the project see ID., « Paul Oskar Kristeller on Renaissance Universities », in JOHN MONFASANI (ed.), *Kristeller Reconsidered: Essays on His Life and Scholarship*, Italcia Press, New York 2006, p. 89–130; and ID., « Studies on the Universities of the Renaissance: An unpublished Work of Paul Oskar Kristeller », *History of Universities*, 24 (2009), p. 36–68. Grendler rightly notes on p. 36 that Kristeller's research on the universities is preserved in 83 spiral notebooks (now in Box 149 of POKP rather than in Box 27 as they were found at the time of Grendler's article). He wrongly asserts, however, that Kristeller « probably began to gather information in the 1930s ». Grendler himself seems never to have made use of Kristeller's notes; and Charles Schmitt told me, although I do not recall exactly when, that neither he nor Nancy Siraisi, the other person to whom Kristeller had initially turned over the project, ever profited from the massive documentation in the notebooks because they found Kristeller's handwriting too difficult to decipher for easy consultation.

²⁴ Kristeller's first article was a comparison of Pomponazzi and Ficino in 1944 (GILBARD, *Bibliographia*, no. 68), followed by the announcement of a manuscript discovery in 1951 (*ibid.*, no. 138), the edition of two unpublished questions of Pomponazzi in 1955 (*ibid.*, no. 177), and a synthetic article on Pomponazzi in 1983 (*ibid.*, no. 523).

²⁵ In addition to the four items on Pomponazzi mentioned in the previous note, Kristeller produced six works on the school of Salerno, i. e., first an article as early as 1945 (*ibid.*, no. 74), another in 1957 (*ibid.*, 196), a third in 1959 (*ibid.*, no. 209), a fourth in 1967 (*ibid.*, no. 329), a fifth in 1976 (*ibid.*, no. 423), and a small monograph in 1987 (*ibid.*, no. 588). Furthermore, he had published four articles on Renaissance universities: a first article in 1953 (*ibid.*, no. 157), another in 1956 (*ibid.*, no. 189), a third in 1985 (*ibid.*, no. 569), and a fourth in 1987 (*ibid.*, no. 599). There were two work on Thomism: the classic monograph on Renaissance Thomism in 1967 (*ibid.*, no. 335) and an article on the influence of Thomas Aquinas upon the jurist Bornio da Sala in 1987 (*ibid.*, no. 553). And then there was a series of individual articles, some very memorable, such as on Petrarch's 'Averroists' in 1952 in (*ibid.*, no. 149), on an Averroistic treatise to Guido Cavalcanti in 1975 (*ibid.*, no. 175), on Paduan Averroism and Alexandrism in 1960 (*ibid.*, no. 232), and on Renaissance Aristotelianism in 1962 (*ibid.*, no. 258). Finally, we need to mention two early articles, one on the scholastic background of Marsilio Ficino (in 1944; *ibid.*, no. 69) and another on an Aristotelian manuscript glossed by Francesco and Ermolao Barbaro that is a contribution to Renaissance Aristotelianism rather than scholasticism (in 1948; *ibid.*, no. 99).

²⁶ See the previous note.

did he oversee a substantial number of doctoral dissertations at Columbia University on scholasticism in and outside of Italy. Indeed, about a third of the dissertations at Columbia for which he served as the first or second reader were on a scholastic author.²⁷ So, not surprisingly, very soon after Kristeller came to America, someone who became a dear friend, Dean Lockwood, then writing a book on the fifteenth-century Italian scholastic Ugo Benzi, frequently turned to Kristeller for expert advice on the arcana of Italian scholasticism.²⁸ However, one of the greatest effects of Kristeller's transformation into an expert on Italian scholasticism and Aristotelianism involves a seemingly very different subject, Renaissance humanism, which brings us to the second major change that Kristeller's arrival in America wrought in his thinking and scholarship.

Kristeller's most famous and most controversial assertion is his interpretation of Renaissance humanism. As he put it in what was the first formulation of his interpretation, the article « Humanism and Scholasticism in the Italian Renaissance » of 1946: « I would like to suggest that the Italian humanists on the whole were neither good nor bad philosophers, but no philosophers at all ».²⁹ Rather, as he put it in the Martin Classical Lectures of 1954, « I merely want to point out that Renaissance humanism must be understood as a characteristic phase in what may be called the rhetorical tradition in Western culture ».³⁰ The humanists were professional practitioners of the *studia humanitatis*, that is to say, « a clearly defined cycle of scholarly disciplines, namely grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and moral philosophy ».³¹ Several decades ago I ventured to explain how Kristeller came to his revolutionary interpretation on the basis of his unique, one might say, idiosyncratic training in Germany.³² What I said then I think still holds true, but more can be added. As is well known, Kristeller was

²⁷ See the list of thirty-one dissertations in MONFASANI, *Kristeller and Philosophy*, p. 386, fn. 14, ten of which involve a scholastic author.

²⁸ See Lockwood's letters of 15 July 1939, 24 November 1939, and 22 February 1940 in POKP, Box 33, folder 12. Lockwood provides us with a humorous moment in Kristeller's education into the less formal ways of his new environment when he began a letter of 15 July 1939 to Kristeller: « Dont [sic] call me 'Prof.' any more, please. I think we know each other well enough to drop titles ».

²⁹ The article first appeared in *Byzantion*, 17 (1944-1945) (*recte* 1946), p. 346-374 (= Gilbhard, *Bibliographia*, no. 73). I shall quote from the slightly revised reprint in PAUL OSKAR KRISTELLER, *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, ed. Michael Mooney, Columbia University Press, New York 1979, p. 85-105, and in this instance, p. 91. On the date of the first publication of the article see JOHN MONFASANI, « Toward the Genesis of the Kristeller Thesis of Renaissance Humanism: Four Bibliographical Notes », *Renaissance Quarterly*, 53 (2000), p. 1156-1173, at p. 1156, fn. 2, reprinted as Essay XV in Id., *Renaissance Humanism from the Middle Ages to Modern Times*, Ashgate, Farnham 2015 (Variorum Collected Studies Series, 1057).

³⁰ PAUL OSKAR KRISTELLER, *The Classics and Renaissance Thought*, Harvard University Press for Oberlin College, Cambridge, MA, 1955 (Martin Classical Lectures, 15), which I shall cite from the reprint in Id., *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, p. 17-81, and in this case, p. 23-24.

³¹ Ibid., p. 22.

³² MONFASANI, « Toward the Genesis ». See also Id., « Kristeller and His German Professors ».

trained in the history of philosophy at Heidelberg, Marburg, and Freiburg under multiple distinguished professors, beginning with Ernest Hoffmann and ending with Martin Heidegger. It is also well known that he earned a doctorate in classical philology under the tutelage of Werner Jaeger, Edouard Norden, and others in Berlin. These dual degrees gave him a keen understanding of the rhetorical and philosophical traditions in antiquity. But what was critical for his interpretation of humanism was something less mentioned, namely, his interest in medieval history and his seminars with historians associated with the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* who introduced him to the world of medieval documents and specifically to the *ars dictaminis*, the art of letter writing that formed the core of medieval rhetoric and the training of medieval notaries, secretaries, and their university teachers. It was the knowledge and experience gained from this historical training that led Kristeller to the insight that the Renaissance humanists were the professional successors of the medieval *dictatores* and therefore representatives of a phase in the rhetorical tradition of the West. The catalyst that brought all these elements of Kristeller's training together was his participation in 1942 in a panel at the annual conference of the Medieval Academy of America to discuss Richard McKeon's paper « Rhetoric in the Middle Ages ». Faced with the task of commenting on McKeon's paper, Kristeller realized that he could not disagree more with McKeon's *geistesgeschichtliche* approach to the topic, totally unmoored from the practical realities of medieval document writing and professional practice.³³ Two years later, in 1944, in a lecture at Connecticut College, Kristeller revealed his solution, and another two years later, in 1946, his article « Humanism and Scholasticism » came out in *Byzantion*. Kristeller had not only rebuked McKeon's approach to medieval rhetoric based purely on intellectual categories, but also demolished the view of those who wanted to make Renaissance humanism a philosophy or an ideology. He furthered showed those who approached Renaissance humanism as essentially a classical revival that it was in fact so much more and that the classical interests of the humanists needed to be seen in a wider cultural and societal context. What I had failed to do in my article of 2000 on the genesis of the Kristeller thesis was adequately to take into account the second element in Kristeller's title, « Humanism and Scholasticism ». Because of his new found expertise on Italian universities and scholasticism Kristeller could in one stroke contrast the professional rhetoricians and professional philosophers of the Italian Renaissance and demonstrate that far from pushing aside a moribund scholasticism, humanism emerged in Italy at exactly the same time as did an enormously vibrant scholasticism and that throughout the Renaissance humanism and scholasticism competed not as two radically different

³³ MONFASANI, « Toward the Genesis ».

philosophies but as two rival learned cultures, i. e., a renewal of the classical competition between the rhetorical and philosophical traditions.

The Kristeller thesis has engendered considerable opposition from those who, I would contend, hold a magical and/or solipsistic view of humanism, i.e., on the one hand, – poof! – Renaissance humanism just happened without any realistic explanation of how it originated or sustained itself; and on the other, how it wonderfully espoused a worldview or attitude that a particular scholar approves and even commends to the contemporary world.³⁴ The fact that today the only interpretation proponents of a new interpretation seek to refute or modify is Kristeller's confirms that the Kristeller thesis has swept the field.

Arrival in America wrought a third change in Kristeller. Whereas, as far as I know, he had never given a public lecture in Europe, in America he suddenly became an itinerant speaker. Apart from the courses he taught at Yale, Columbia, and New York's City College, in his first three years in America he gave at least twenty talks in locations as varied as the University of Michigan, Duke University in North Carolina, Harvard University, Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, Connecticut College in New London, Connecticut, and multiple professional gatherings in different venues.³⁵ Kristeller would go on to become for the rest of his career an inveterate lecturer all over America and Europe, but not until he was forced in 1939 to make public presentations in pursuit of a job and in order to establish himself in America by making contact with various learned groups did he almost overnight blossom into a highly successful and much traveled public speaker.

Kristeller's peripatetic lecturing connects to the fourth change one can see in him once he arrived in America. He very quickly developed into an extraordinary organizer of cooperative scholarly ventures. One can see indications of this talent already during his days at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa, where he persuaded the director, Giovanni Gentile, to sponsor a text series in which the coterie of talented young classicists he had gathered around himself at the Scuola could publish the Renaissance Latin texts they had edited.³⁶ Once in America,

³⁴ See MONFASANI, «The Renaissance and Renaissance Humanism in America Before and After Wallace K. Ferguson's *The Renaissance in Historical Thought: An Historiographical Essay*», *Rassegna Europea di Letteratura Italiana*, 48 (2016), p. 71–90.

³⁵ I am relying on a section of Kristeller's curriculum vitae in my possession that is a listing in twenty-two pages of «Lectures given in America» from 1939 to 1992.

³⁶ Giovanni Gentile wrote a two page announcement entitled «Nuova collezione di testi umanistici a cura di Giovanni Gentile e Paolo Oscar Kristeller» that was inserted as a sort of postface at the end of vol. II of Kristeller's 1937 *Supplementum Ficinianum*. In the announcement Gentile praised his collaborator as «un giovane dotto, tedesco d'origine ma diventato italiano per l'amore.» In the *Reminiscences*, p. 295–296, Kristeller explained: «Beginning in 1934, I found many interesting unpublished text that concerned not Ficino himself but either members of his circle or contemporaries [...] and I succeeded in persuading Gentile and Olschki that there should be a

however, Kristeller could unleash in full his organizational impulses. He first became actively involved with the Committee on Renaissance Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies, and when the ACLS would no longer support the Renaissance committee, in 1954 he became one of the founding members of the Renaissance Society of America, and in 1957 its second president.³⁷ One of the projects he proposed to the Renaissance committee of the ACLS, a project he seems to have conceived of in 1943/1944 and of which he became its heart and soul for the next thirty years was the *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum. Mediaeval and Renaissance Latin Translations and Commentaries*, a vast cooperative enterprise that seeks to list and analyze every commentary on Latin classical and patristic texts since the end of antiquity and every translation of and commentary on Greek classical and patristic texts in the same period up to the year 1600.³⁸ His correspondence for the years 1945–1946, when he was getting the project off the ground, as preserved in the Kristeller Papers at Columbia, is utterly monumental. He tried to interest in the project organizations such as the ACLS' Renaissance Committee, the Medieval Academy of America, and the American Philological Association, while at the same time recruiting a very broad group of scholars to participate and organizing meetings for those committed to the project to flesh out the details of the undertaking.³⁹ In a report of 1951, he listed 239 scholars with whom he had been in correspondence concerning the *Catalogus*, in addition to fourteen other members of the editorial board with whom he was in frequent contact.⁴⁰ Not until the early 1970s did he turn over the leadership of the *Catalogus* to his friend, F. Edward Cranz, who oversaw the production of volume III of the series (today the *Catalogus* has published its eleventh volume under the leadership of its fourth general editor, Greti Dinkova-Bruun).⁴¹

series of humanistic texts to be edited [...] the Scuola Normale would subsidize it [...] the involvement of the Scuola Normale was justified because with the encouragement of Gentile I persuaded many of my young friends in Pisa to undertake such texts, and at least half a dozen were assigned before I left Pisa ».

³⁷ See KRISTELLER, *Reminiscences*, p. 404, 548–554, 606–611; and the delightful F. EDWARD CRANZ, « Fifty Years of the New England Renaissance Conference », *Renaissance Quarterly*, 42 (1989), p. 749–759.

³⁸ See fn. 41 below.

³⁹ See the next fn.

⁴⁰ The address given for communications was Kristeller's office in Casa Italiana, Columbia University (1161 Amsterdam Ave., New York). See « Latin Translations and Commentaries, Medieval and Renaissance » by P. S. [sic] KRISTELLER, in S. HARRISON THOMSON, *Progress of Medieval and Renaissance Studies in the United States and Canada. Bulletin no. 21* (1951), University of Colorado Boulder, Boulder, p. 76–84. A second and third annual report by Kristeller was published in *ibid.*, *Bulletin no. 22* (1953), p. 52–55; and a fourth, fifth, and sixth report in *ibid.*, *Bulletin no. 24* (1957), p. 34–35.

⁴¹ In the *Reminiscences*, p. 550–558, Kristeller dates the start of the project as a cooperative venture to a meeting of interested scholars in April 1945 at the New Yorker Hotel hosted by Leicester

At the same time that he was launching the *Catalogus*, Kristeller also was a prime mover in establishing Columbia University's Renaissance Seminar, which he served as secretary for many years and since 1945 has been a well-known venue for Renaissance scholars from everywhere to come and deliver papers on their research.⁴² Last, but not least, in these years Kristeller was actively seeking support for his *Iter Italicum*, though it must be said that until the 1970s, a project that should have been the work of an *équipe* of scholars, remained in fact a one-man show, the product, as Kristeller put it in the preface of volume III, of his left and right arms.⁴³

The last, and fifth, of the changes America brought about in Kristeller was that it made him think very seriously about the history of philosophy and of history in general. In his *Reminiscences* Kristeller remarks that had he stayed in Germany, he would have pursued a philosophical synthesis combining Neo-Kantianism, Neoplatonism, and existentialism, but that he found in America a philosophical climate so uncongenial to his outlook that it discouraged him from continuing along this path.⁴⁴ Instead, he concentrated on another theoretical interest, history and the history of philosophy.⁴⁵ Already in Germany, first with Heinrich Rickert in Heidelberg, then in Marburg with Martin Heidegger he had studied the philosophy of history. So not surprisingly his first theoretical writings in America were on history, beginning with an article in 1943 on the method of history,

Bradner, as the secretary of the Renaissance Committee of the American Council of Learned Societies. Vol. 1 appeared in 1960: *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum: Medieval and Renaissance Latin Translations and Commentaries. Annotated Lists and Guides*, Washington, DC, Catholic University of America, under the aegis of the Union Académique Internationale, to which Kristeller wrote annual reports from 1953 to 1969 (see GILBARD, *Bibliographia*, no. 163, for a list of the reports published in the annual *Compte rendu* of the Union). Kristeller's preface of 21 April 1958 to the first volume has been reprinted at the start of every volume ever since. The last volume Kristeller edited was vol. 2, which appeared in 1971. Kristeller's correspondence in connection with the *Catalogus* occupy three boxes of his papers: POKP, Boxes 96–98; with substantial other related correspondence in Boxes 100 and 101.

⁴² See *Reminiscences*, p. 532–539; and the seminar's website <<http://universityseminars.columbia.edu/seminars/the-renaissance/>>. A whole box of the Kristeller Papers is given over to his correspondence concerning the seminar: POKP, Box 113.

⁴³ KRISTELLER, *Iter Italicum*, III, p. XIX: « As my late friend Robert Branner put it, my *équipe* consisted mainly of my right and left arms ».

⁴⁴ See KRISTELLER, *Reminiscences*, p. 951–952: « If I had remained in Germany I might have pursued a philosophical synthesis that combined elements of Neo-Kantianism of the realist kind, Neo-Platonism and existentialism [...] My emigration first to Italy and then to America discouraged any further work along these lines, since I encountered a philosophical climate, especially in America, that was quite uncongenial to my philosophical outlook ». He expressed the same sentiment in almost the same words in his « Philosophical Testament »; see MONFASANI, « Kristeller and Philosophy », p. 408–409, paragraphs 19 and 21.

⁴⁵ See PAUL OSKAR KRISTELLER, « Historical Scholarship and Philosophical Thought », *Minerva*, 18 (1980), p. 313–323, where he says at the start, p. 313: « The centre of my interest and of my work has always been the history of philosophy ».

where, echoing Rickert to an extent, he distinguished the methods and aims of history from that of science and the social sciences, followed by another article in 1946 on « The Philosophical Significance of the History of Thought ».⁴⁶ Kristeller would go on to write five more significant essays on history and the history of philosophy, the last in 1991, and one of which resulted in his having for the first time in his life an article rejected by a journal.⁴⁷ This problematic piece contained sarcastic remarks concerning linguistic analysis that the editor feared would offend the journal's subscribers.⁴⁸ But Kristeller's most personal and deepest thought about history came not in any of his articles on the subject, but in a talk he gave in 1961 on Renaissance philosophy and medieval traditions. I have quoted it before in other venues, but it is worth repeating here:

[I]f I may be allowed to conclude with a personal confession, I believe that nothing that once was can be completely undone. Even if destroyed in the material world and forgotten by men, it remains and will remain alive in the memory of an infinite being for which the past as well as the future is always present, and that is thus the greatest, the only true historian, and the keeper of the eternal tradition of which even our best human traditions, to use a Platonist phrase, are but shadows and images.⁴⁹

I noticed some years ago that Kristeller's thoughts on God, history, and time seem to echo some positions of Alfred North Whitehead.⁵⁰ When Kristeller first came to America, he met Whitehead, then a very old man, at Harvard.⁵¹ Significantly, in

⁴⁶ See PAUL OSKAR KRISTELLER, « Some Remarks on the Method of History », *The Journal of Philosophy*, 40 (1943), p. 225–245, written with Lincoln Reis (but see MONFASANI, « Kristeller and Philosophy », p. 398, fn. 64); and ID., « The Philosophical Significance of the History of Thought », *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 7 (1946), p. 360–366 (reprinted multiple times; see GILBHARD, *Bibliographia*, no. 86).

⁴⁷ See MONFASANI, *Kristeller and Philosophy*, p. 397–405.

⁴⁸ KRISTELLER, *Reminiscences*, p. 691–692: « Then I published a methodological article on the history of philosophy and the history of ideas in the *Journal of the History of Philosophy* [GILBHARD, *Bibliographia*, no. 283], in 1964. It has a peculiar history, because the article was commissioned by an Australian scholar, [John] Passmore [then at Canberra], who wanted to publish it in a periodical, *History and Theory*. This article of mine contained some sarcastic remarks about linguistic analysis, which is of course dominant in the English-speaking countries, and he felt that he could not afford to offer that to his audience, so it is the first instance when an article of mine was commissioned and then rejected ».

⁴⁹ PAUL OSKAR KRISTELLER, *Renaissance Philosophy and the Medieval Tradition*, Archabbey Press, Latrobe, PA, 1966 (Wimmer Lecture, 15), p. 81–82 (see Gilbhard, *Bibliographia*, no. 321 for reprints and translations). See MONFASANI, « Kristeller and Philosophy », p. 404; and ID., « Italy in the Career », p. 20–21.

⁵⁰ MONFASANI, « Italy in the Career », p. 19–20; and ID., « Kristeller and Philosophy », p. 404–405, fn. 93.

⁵¹ KRISTELLER, *Reminiscences*, p. 373: « [visiting Harvard soon after arrival in America] I do remember also old Whitehead (Alfred North Whitehead) was alive, and the nice secretary of the Philosophy Department arranged for me to have a visit with Whitehead. He was already a very old man, tired,

his *Reminiscences*, Kristeller also mentions that he later read Whitehead and was influenced by him.⁵² So even in his mature thinking about history, coming to America was pivotal for Kristeller.

Kristeller adapted himself to America, but his early career was not easy and left him in a position of relative insecurity until he achieved fame with the publication of his *Martin Classical Lectures* at Oberlin College in 1954. The lectures were published by Harvard University Press in 1955 and reprinted in the extraordinarily successful paperback, *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanist Strains*, put out by Harper Torchbooks in 1961.⁵³ In 1956 Columbia University promoted him to full professor, and in that same year appeared the first of the four volumes of his massive *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters*, containing twenty-five of the more than forty-eight articles he had published up to that time.⁵⁴ So by the mid-1950s, after fifteen years in America, Kristeller had arrived as one of the most preeminent scholars in America, a fact confirmed by his election in 1955 as a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.⁵⁵

Why Kristeller had achieved this exalted status can be explained rather succinctly. By the mid-1950s he had published four significant books, one on Plotinus, two on Marsilio Ficino, and one consisting of some of his most important articles published up to that date; he had revolutionized whole sectors of scholarship, from the interpretation of Renaissance humanism and Italian scholasticism, to the understanding of Marsilio Ficino, to the study of manuscripts starting with his two articles on manuscript catalogues and unprinted inventories that were first brought together in a book in 1960, which quickly went out of print,⁵⁶ to, finally, brilliant ground-breaking research on a

white haired, and he listened to me for a while and was very friendly and encouraging, and I remember his saying, 'I have a hunch that you will become a professor in this country' ».

⁵² Ibid.: « I have subsequently become interested in his work, and have great respect for it ». Interesting is the connection to Whitehead made by another student of Martin Heidegger, ELISABETH FEIST HIRSCH, « Remembrances of Martin Heidegger in Marburg », *Philosophy Today*, Summer 1979, p. 160–169, that I quote from EAD., *Selected Writings*, Franklin Press, Germantown, MD, 1993, p. 336–345, at p. 342: « I do not know how thoroughly Heidegger was acquainted with the philosophy of Whitehead's philosophy of process but he thought that Whitehead's philosophy, which involves ever new creations or 'occasions' had an affinity to his own thinking ».

⁵³ For this bibliographical history see GILBARD, *Bibliography*, nos. 172 and 242.

⁵⁴ See GILBARD, *Bibliographia*, no. 187, for an analysis of the volume. Vol. 2 appeared in 1985; vol. 3 in 1993; and vol. 4 in 1996.

⁵⁵ A comment on Kristeller's achievement made not long after, in 1958–1963, by Hans Wallach to Elisabeth Feist Hirsch, like Wallach a German refugee and a long-time friend of Kristeller is poignant: « I only recently realized how important P.O. has become. Martin Ostwald here said flatly: Kristeller is a great man. He deserves to be, for he has devoted his life in a single-minded way to very hard work » (TEDESCHI, « Kristeller and Feist Hirsch », 252; see also p. 248–249).

⁵⁶ This work, destined to become a scholarly classic, first appeared as an article in *Traditio*, 6, in 1948, followed by a second edition as an article in *Traditio*, 9, in 1953, and finally in its third

variety of subjects, such as Renaissance Hermeticism, Early Modern atheism, and the origin of the modern system of the arts.⁵⁷ And all the while people knew that he was preparing an epochal publication on Renaissance manuscripts, the *Iter Italicum*, the first volume of which appeared in 1963. But what needs to be asked and what will constitute the last part of this paper is how did Kristeller so quickly and successfully integrate himself into the American academic and, in general, intellectual scene.

The first answer is obvious, but crucial, namely, his swift mastery of English. He had studied English privately already when he was a schoolboy in Germany.⁵⁸ But even more importantly, he was linguistically gifted. Unlike many émigrés, Kristeller came to speak English without an accent. He had his difficulties at the start. In the Plotinus seminar at Yale in the spring of 1939, he always wrote out an outline in English of what he would say in the seminar and then went over it with Roland Bainton, his sponsor at Yale.⁵⁹ I recall him in a seminar at Columbia in 1965–1966 still complaining about his being forced in 1939 to translate into English for publication a newly discovered Italian poem of Michelangelo when his English was still a work in progress.⁶⁰ Anyone reading his earliest American talks and publications will discover occasional errors of grammar or idiom. But amazingly quickly he became a master of spoken and written English.⁶¹ Indeed, in many years of hearing him, I encountered only one strange quirk: he would

edition as a book: *Latin Manuscript Books Before 1600: A List of the Printed Catalogues and Unpublished Inventories of Extant Collections*, Fordham University Press, New York 1960. Reprinted in 1965, it was thoroughly revised and expanded in a fourth edition by SIGRID KRÄMER in 1993 for the Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, München. See GILBHARD, *Bibliographia*, nos. 100, 158, 227, 300, 594, 673.

⁵⁷ On Kristeller's article on the modern system of the arts see MONFASANI, « Kristeller and Philosophy », p. 395–397. For Kristeller's ground-breaking articles on Renaissance Hermeticism see GILBHARD, *Bibliographia*, nos. 14 (in 1938), 38 (in 1941), and 228 (in 1960). The article on the myth of Renaissance atheism first appeared in Spanish in 1953 before being translated into English and French; see *ibid.*, no. 160.

⁵⁸ Kristeller's mother was fluent in English; see KRISTELLER, *Reminiscences*, p. 7; for his private tutors in English and French see *ibid.*, p. 48. He also had eight years of French in school and one year of English (*ibid.*, p. 48–49).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 367: « I gave a seminar on Plotinus and I had to prepare it, and I wrote down my English outline, and I think Bainton went over it so that my English would at least be correct if not fluent ».

⁶⁰ See CHARLES DE TOLNAY, « Michelangelo Studies », *The Art Bulletin*, 22/3 (Sept. 1940), p. 127–137, at p. 127: « The following transcription, with word-separations, accents, and punctuation in accordance with modern usage, has been made by Dr. Paul Oskar Kristeller of Columbia University, who has also been kind enough to provide the English translation ».

⁶¹ This was so much the case that late in life he found writing in English easier than doing so in German; see his letter of 7 May 1994 in response to a letter written in German by W. Cameron McEwen (POKP, Box 35, folder 6): « I have your interesting letters of May 3 (in German) and May 4 (in English). You will allow me to reply in English. My English may not be perfect, but after 55 years in this country, it is easier for me, especially when I discuss professional subjects ».

invariably pronounce 'simple' as 'sample', probably under the influence of French pronunciation, a language in which he was fluent from youth.

The second reason for Kristeller's quick integration into American academia would seem to contradict the first, namely, the network of German acquaintances whom he found waiting for him upon arrival in America.⁶² We have already seen how Hermann Weigand of Yale (American born of German parents) was waiting for him at the dock in New York in 1939. Kristeller would initially stay in Weigand's house while teaching his seminar on Plotinus at Yale. Others at Yale providing material as well as moral support were the expert on ancient Assyria, Albrecht Goetze, the distinguished historian Hajo Holborn, the musicologist Leo Strade, the then young historian Theodore Mommsen, Jr., and yet another young refugee scholar, Elizabeth Feist, who would become a very dear friend of Kristeller's.⁶³ At the University of Chicago was his old teacher Werner Jaeger. Kristeller was seemingly promised a position at Chicago, but the offer evaporated when Jaeger transferred to Harvard in the fall of 1939.⁶⁴ The Kristeller Papers at Columbia contain extensive correspondence with other German refugee scholars from these early years, such as Friedrich Solmsen, initially at Mount Olivet College in Michigan and then Cornell University,⁶⁵ Hans Baron in New York, Erwin Panofsky at Princeton, Ludwig Edelstein at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, Leo Spitzer also at Johns Hopkins, Herbert Dieckmann at Washington University in St. Louis, Karl Löwith after he arrived at Hartford Theological Seminary from Japan in 1941, and Hannah Arendt after she too arrived in America in 1941, all of whom corresponded with Kristeller at least initially almost exclusively in German.

Nor did Kristeller's dealings with other German refugees reflect only scholarly interests and/or his desire to integrate himself in America. Hans Baron, who became famous in the 1950s, is a case in point. Hard of hearing and overly sensitive to perceived slights that led to quarrels with colleagues, Baron had lost

⁶² See Kristeller's humorous comment in *Reminiscences*, p. 375: « And when I arrived I joked. I said that when people came to this country they had to have either a bankbook or an address book. I didn't have a bankbook, but I had an address book ».

⁶³ See TEDESCHI, *Correspondence of Roland H. Bainton*, p. 97–99, 255–256; and Id., « Paul Oskar Kristeller and Elisabeth Feist Hirsh: A Lifetime Connection » in MONFASANI, *Kristeller Reconsidered*, p. 233–225.

⁶⁴ Jaeger told Kristeller in letters of 12 and 29 March 1939 of talks with Dean Richard McKeon about the possibility of a fellowship at the University of Chicago (POKP, Box 27, folder 3). Kristeller speaks of this possibility in *Reminiscences*, p. 331: « I personally wrote to my teacher Werner Jaeger, who was at that time at the University of Chicago, and he practically arranged for me to come to Chicago with a fellowship. Then he left for Harvard, and as soon as he left the people in Chicago forgot about it, and nothing happened »; and p. 383: « Then I went to Chicago and I met two important people with whom I had had correspondence. One was the philosopher Richard McKeon, a great authority on medieval philosophy who had been involved by Jaeger in an attempt to get me to Chicago on a fellowship, something that fell apart after Jaeger left Chicago ».

⁶⁵ This extensive correspondence is found in POKP, Box 53, folder 17.

his position at Queens College in New York in the early 1940s.⁶⁶ I recently came across a letter of Kristeller's to James Hutton at Cornell in which Kristeller asked Hutton if he could find something for Baron at Cornell.⁶⁷ There is even an earlier letter of E. A. Lowe at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, asking Kristeller what he thought of Baron, who had applied for a fellowship.⁶⁸ Since Baron did become a member of the Institute, Kristeller's response, we can safely assume, was highly supportive.

Finally, we need to look at a neglected aspect of Kristeller's first years in America, namely, the massive number of reviews he wrote, especially in *The Journal of Philosophy*, which had its offices at Columbia University and which made Kristeller a book editor, doubtlessly on the recommendation of John Herman Randall, in 1940.⁶⁹ Between 1939 and 1954 Kristeller published seventy-nine book reviews, somewhat more than five a year, in various journals on a wide range of books, mainly in Renaissance studies, but also in other areas, especially in ancient philosophy.⁷⁰ Indeed, between the time of his German dissertation on Plotinus in 1928 and his article on the Ideas in Middle Platonism, again in German, more than sixty years later, in 1989,⁷¹ his only publications on ancient philosophy were the reviews he wrote in English as he exploited his position as book editor to impress upon his American audience his expertise in the history of ancient philosophy. But he also wrote reviews of books on the Inquisition in medieval Narbonne, on Paracelsus, on St. Thomas More, on Giambattista Vico, on Renaissance art, on English drama, and on medieval literature, specifically, on Ernest Robert Curtius' *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter* in 1950. It is unfortunate that Kristeller did not include any of these reviews in the four volume of his *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Literature* since many are immensely learned, offering erudite corrections and fresh manuscript information. Interestingly enough, in reviewing one book, Eugenio Garin's *Der italienische Humanismus* of 1947, a book with an interpretation diametrically opposed to his, Kristeller came close to writing a non-review, merely reporting the contents of the book and

⁶⁶ See KAY SCHILLER, *Gelehrte Gegenwelten: Über humanistische Leitbilder im 20. Jahrhundert*, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt a. M. 2000, p. 99–173; GERHARD A. RITTER, *German Refugee Historians and Friedrich Meinecke. Letters and Documents, 1910–1977*, trans. ALEX SKINNER, Brill, Leiden – Boston 2010 (Studies in Central European histories, 49), p. 56–61, 286–319; and MONFASANI, « Renaissance and Renaissance Humanism », p. 76–81, 88–89.

⁶⁷ POKP, Box 26, folder 6, for Kristeller's letter of 19 October 1948 to Hutton.

⁶⁸ POK, Box 34, folder 8, for Lowe's letter of 13 March 1946 to Kristeller.

⁶⁹ He first appeared as one of the book editors in the vol. 37, no. 4 (July 4, 1940) issue of the *Journal* and ceased to be listed as such in vol. 48, no. 26 (Dec. 20, 1951), when the position of book editor itself ceased to be listed in the *Journal's* masthead.

⁷⁰ See GILBHARD, *Bibliographia*, nos. 25, 27–36, 41–47, 52–57, 61–66, 70–72, 77–83, 87–92, 96–98, 102–105, 109–117, 128–132, 140–146, 150–152, 168–169.

⁷¹ He anticipated the argument of his 1989 article in a review of Georg Luck's *Der Akademiker Antiochos* that he wrote in 1959 in *The Journal of Philosophy*, 56, p. 425–27, at p. 426.

commenting on the ambiguity of the term humanism and the need not to take rhetorical statements as genuine expressions of an author's views.⁷² Kristeller was obviously determined to avoid any criticism of the scholar who had been a friendly acquaintance in Italy and who would go to be his greatest rival in the debate over Renaissance humanism. Not that Kristeller was normally shy in voicing criticism. In the case of one book, he remarked that its defects were « likely to make the book unsatisfactory to the scholar and dangerous for the general reader ».⁷³ And concerning another, he explained: « This whole section is needlessly repetitious and filled with verbatim quotations from more or less modern sources that are of dubious value, selected without judgment, and cited without care ».⁷⁴ As much as any of his other publications, the English language reviews revealed how caustically witty Kristeller could be

Kristeller was not ubiquitous in his first fifteen years in America, though he may have seemed so between his reviews, itinerant lecturing, continuous organizational meetings and petitions, and, of course, his stupendous outpouring of learned articles. I have already given a great deal of evidence of Kristeller's integration into American academia at the highest levels by the mid-1950s. But recently I came across a most poignant, but unpublished testimony that can fittingly end this talk. Wallace K. Ferguson had literally written *the* book on the interpretations of the Renaissance to the mid-twentieth century, i. e., *The Renaissance in Historical Thought*. On February 10, 1957, Ferguson wrote Kristeller that he had just read Kristeller's *Martin Classical Lectures* in the first edition put out by Harvard University Press in 1955. One has to keep in mind that by that date Ferguson had read Hans Baron's and Eugenio Garin's works on Renaissance humanism. Indeed, he had already participated in a symposium on the Baron thesis at a recent meeting of the American Historical Association.⁷⁵ So with full knowledge of the various interpretations, he wrote Kristeller:

I do not see how anyone could have got more information and more sane and discriminating interpretation into four lectures. It all makes sense and that is more than can be said for a great deal of writing about humanism. It is also

⁷² Kristeller gave a brief notice in *The Journal of Philosophy*, 47 (1950), p. 222–223; he wrote the review for *The Romanic Review*, 41 (1950), p. 218–219. See STÉPHANE TOUSSAINT, « Kristeller, Garin e l'Umanesimo. Appunti Ritrovati », in STEFANO CAROTI, VITTORIA PERRONE COMPAGNI (eds.), *Nuovi maestri e antichi testi: Umanesimo alle origini del pensiero moderno. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi in onore di Cesare*, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze 2002 (Ingenium, 17), p. 157–166, for a discussion of Kristeller's notes in Garin's book preserved in the Fondo Kristeller of the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa.

⁷³ Review of Charles Norris Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture* in *The Journal of Philosophy*, 41 (1944), p. 577.

⁷⁴ Review of Giovanni Di Napoli, *Tommaso Campanella filosofo della restaurazione cattolica*, in *The Philosophical Review*, 59 (1950), p. 251.

⁷⁵ See MONFASANI, « Renaissance and Renaissance Humanism », p. 76–77.

beautifully written. The last sentence on page 89 is alone worth the price of the book.⁷⁶

That last sentence on p. 89 is, in fact, a typical dictum of Kristeller, one that he voiced more than once in conversation and in print. And so, giving Kristeller the last word, I quote it as another example of his wit:

Originality is greatly to be admired, but it is a gift of nature or providence; it cannot be taught, and I doubt that it is harmed by knowledge or increased by ignorance.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ A letter of Ferguson to Kristeller of 10 February 1957 in POKP, Box 18, folder 6.

⁷⁷ KRISTELLER, *Classics and Renaissance Thought*, p. 89 (= ID., *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, p. 80). The quoted passage occurs on the last page or so of the last of the Martin Classical Lectures, « Paganism and Christianity ».

Appendix 1

A Notarized Memorandum concerning Kristeller's Parents in 1942

The memorandum is to be found in POKP, Box 65, folder 8. I have no information concerning the author, Ella Dekuzcynski. Moreover, since at the time Germany and the United States had already been at war with each other for five months, one would like to know the circumstances that allowed her to be in Berlin that spring and then leave for and arrive in New York shortly after. She may have been in Berlin in an attempt to rescue relatives. Both the *Gedenkbuch Berlins*, p. 242, and *Gedenkbuch: Opfer der Verfolgung der Juden*, p. 253, record the death of Herbert and Irma Dekuzcynski (née Hauser) at Auschwitz without a specific date, and of a Rosa Dekuzcynski in Minsk, whose death *Theresienstädter Gedenkbuch*, p. 41, dates as 23 July 1942 in Treblinka.

The formal nature of the memorandum suggests it was meant to help justify Kristeller's claim for a refund of the funds he had spent to acquire the Cuban visa for his parents.

Ella Dekuzcynski
602 West 137th Street
Apt. 53
New York, N.Y.

June 8, 1942

To whom it may concern:

This is to certify that, on May 15th, 1942, the day before I left Berlin for New York, I met Mr. Heinrich KRISTELLER, father of Dr. Paul Oskar Kristeller of Columbia University, resident of New York (611 West 114th Street, Apt. 6 A).

Mr. Heinrich Kristeller told me that the Cuba visa which his son had applied for on behalf of his parents had been rejected.

[signature] Ella Dekuzcynski
[typed] Ella Dekuzcynski

[handwritten]
State of NY
County of NY

Sworn to before me this 9th day of June 1942

Raphael Pivick

[underneath: Notary Republic Stamp of Raphael Pivick]

THE DIVISION OF PHILOSOPHY IN BRITISH LIBRARY MS ADDITIONAL 62130*

GRETI DINKOVA-BRUUN
PONTIFICAL INSTITUTE OF MEDIAEVAL STUDIES, TORONTO



I. Manuscript Context

The short anonymous text discussed and edited in this note is copied as a second column on fol. 138r of the British Library, MS Additional 62130. This large miscellaneous codex, compiled at the Cistercian Abbey of the Blessed Virgin at Fountains, comprises texts on a variety of topics written between the thirteenth and the fifteenth century.

The text in question, entitled *Divisio philosophie*, is found in a codicological unit that can be dated to the thirteenth century. The unit is made of three gatherings occupying fol. 130r–150v (with fol. 150 left blank), and the *Divisio* belongs to the first of them. It is preceded by an excerpt from the *Ars catholice fidei* of the French theologian Nicholas of Amiens (1147–c. 1200) and followed by another anonymous text entitled *De aquis supra firmamentum questio quedam*.¹ It is possible, but not absolutely certain, that the *Divisio* and the *De aquis* were intended to be read as two thematically linked components of one and the same piece.

* I am grateful to Charles Burnett, John Magee, and Cecilia Panti for their useful comments and suggestions.

¹ For a cursory description of the entire codex and its history, see the online catalogue of the British Library: <<http://searcharchives.bl.uk/>>. A detailed list of the contents on this particular gathering is found in GRETI DINKOVA-BRUUN, « How Do Waters Stay Above the Firmament?: British Library, MS Additional 62130 and Its *De aquis supra firmamentum questio quedam* », in GRETI DINKOVA-BRUUN, TRISTAN MAJOR (eds.), *Teaching and Learning in Medieval Europe. Essays in Honour of Gernot R. Wieland*, Brepols, Turnhout 2017 (Publications of The Journal of Medieval Latin, 11), p. 211–222, esp. 214–216; the *Divisio* is discussed briefly in fn. 10 of this article.

II. The Contents of the 'Divisio philosophie'

In the first paragraph of the text the anonymous author presents the *communis philosophorum ratio* according to which the scientific discipline of philosophy is divided into *physica*, *ethica*, and *logica*.² Then he subdivides philosophy into *speculativa* and *practica*, with the *speculativa* encompassing the following sub-branches: 1) *theologia*, which considers the nature of the incorporeal things that exist *extra corpora*; 2) *mathematica*, which discusses the nature of the things *circa corpora*; and 3) *physica*, which deals with the properties or nature of the bodies themselves. Even though this tripartite division of *philosophia speculativa* is known from Boethius' *De trinitate*, ch. 2,³ the actual definitions of the three speculative branches provided in Additional 62130 are much closer to the text of Thierry of Chartres' prologue to his *Lectiones in Boethii librum De trinitate* as well as to William of Conches' glosses on Boethius' *Consolatio philosophiae*, even though William calls the speculative branch *theorica*.⁴

After this standard opening, the remaining three paragraphs of the text in Additional 62130 are dedicated to dividing philosophy into *superior* and *inferior*. The author explains this division three times. In his first formulation both the superior and the inferior branches are given two further subdivisions (see Appendix, no. C). On the one hand, the superior branch deals with the Creative Nature (*de natura creatrice*), which is the subject matter of theology, while on the other it considers

² See JAMES A. WEISHEIPL, « Medieval Classification of the Sciences », *Mediaeval Studies*, 27 (1965), p. 54–90, esp. 62–65. For the text of Boethius, see BOETHIUS, *De sancta trinitate*, ch. 2, in Id., *Opuscula Sacra*, vol. II, ed. ALAIN GALONNIER, Peeters, Louvain 2013 (*Philosophes médiévaux*, 53), p. 136–139. The system is further developed by Hugh of St. Victor in his *Didascalicon*, Bk. 2, ch. 1 (see WEISHEIPL, « Medieval Classification », p. 65–66). A schematic representation of the divisions discussed in this section is presented in the Appendix (nos. A and B).

³ Boethius' doctrine on the division of the sciences is outlined in JOHN MAGEE, « Boethius », in LLOYD P. GERSON (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, 2 vols., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2010, vol. 2, p. 788–812, esp. 797–798. The three sub-branches of *practica*, which is not treated in Add. 62130, are *ethica*, *economica*, and *politica*. Boethius' theory is expanded conceptually by Gilbert of Poitiers (d. 1154) who takes into account the substantial and accidental features of the objects investigated by the different branches of philosophy; see NIKOLAUS M. HÄRING, *The Commentaries on Boethius by Gilbert of Poitiers*, PIMS, Toronto 1966 (*Studies and Texts*, 13), p. 79–80; LAUGE OLAF NIELSEN, *Theology and Philosophy in the Twelfth Century. A study of Gilbert Porreta's Thinking and the Theological Expositions of the Doctrine of the Incarnation during the Period 1130–1180*, Brill, Leiden 1982 (*Acta theologica Danica*, 15), p. 87–98; and JOHN MARENBO, « Gilbert of Poitiers », in PETER DRONKE, *A History of Twelfth-Century Western Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1988, p. 328–352, esp. 338–340. The author of the text in Add. 62130 seems to be familiar with the twelfth century developments.

⁴ See *Commentaries on Boethius by Thierry of Chartres and His School*, ed. NIKOLAUS M. HÄRING, PIMS, Toronto 1971 (*Studies and Texts*, 20), p. 126; and GUILLELMI DE CONCHIS *Glosae super Boetium. In Consolationem*, ed. LODI NAUTA, Brepols, Turnhout 1999 (*Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* [= CCCM], 158), p. 31. See below, fn. 15.

the created universe according to its qualities and causes, which are concerns that are the purview of the *doctrina quadrivii*, or arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.⁵ Here the anonymous author singles out *astronomia*, probably because of all quadrivial sciences its subject matter exemplifies most clearly how the human senses perceive God's creation.⁶ The inferior branch has likewise two parts: one which considers the effects of nature in things, like when Hippocrates ponders the theory of why remedies work, reasoning deductively from cause to effect; the other when the effects of nature are considered through direct observation of the ways in which they change the patient. Here the example is Aesculapius who, by trying different remedies, proceeds inductively from effect to cause. So, Hippocrates represents the theoretical approach in medicine, while Aesculapius exemplifies the experimental one.⁷

In his second explanation of the *superior* vs. *inferior* division of philosophy the author does not provide subdivisions, even though his explanations of what the branches cover elaborate further the meaning of the definitions already presented in the previous paragraph (see Appendix, no. D). Thus, the superior philosophy deals with the (creative) principle of nature in addition to the properties of the created world within time. These two characteristics clearly correspond to theology and the quadrivial sciences from the previous paragraph. The inferior philosophy treats the effects of nature in things, their defects and the cures of those defects. Again this statement more or less repeats what was said before about Hippocrates and Aesculapius.

The final paragraph of the text presents once again the division of superior and inferior philosophy (see Appendix, no. E). If in the first definition of superior philosophy the author talked about nature as a creative force and in the second he outlined the principles of this creative operation, here he says that the *natura creatrix* creates according to its own rules (*secundum se*), meaning that nature in itself is the cause of the creation of things. After this, the author repeats for a third time that inferior philosophy treats the effects of nature in things, adding that these effects are *secundum aliud*, that is, according to the principles of creation. This complex discussion on the creative principles of nature can be linked in general terms to Book I of the *Periphyseon*, where Eriugena talks about the ineffable nature of the divine.⁸

⁵ BOETHIUS, *De aritmetica* I.1. See MAGEE, « Boethius », p. 797–798. For a useful discussion on the reception of the liberal arts in medieval England, see WINSTON BLACK, « The Quadrivium and Natural Sciences », in RITA COPELAND (ed.) *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, vol. I: (800–1558), Oxford University Press, Oxford 2016, p. 77–94.

⁶ See DINKOVA-BRUUN, « How Do Waters Stay Above the Firmament? », p. 217 and fn. 15.

⁷ This definition is found in ISIDORE, *Etymologiae* IV.4.1; see ISIDORI HISPALENSIS *Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX*, ed. WALLACE MARTIN LINDSAY, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1911, and below, fn. 17.

⁸ See IOHANNIS SCOTTI SEU ERIUGENAE *Periphyseon*, ed. ÉDOUARD JEAUNEAU, 2 vols., Brepols, Turnhout 1996–2003 (CCCM, 161–165), vol. I, p. 32–35.

A couple of observations need to be made in regard to the divisions offered by the author of the text in Additional 62130:

1) First, even though it is tempting to assume that the division between *superior* and *inferior* refers to *speculativa* and *practica* this does not seem to be the case.⁹ In fact, the inferior philosophy is completely equated with medicine, in both its theoretical and experimental manifestations, which leads to the conclusion that by *philosophia inferior* the anonymous author actually means *physica*, i.e. one of the sub-branches of *philosophia speculativa*, rather than *practica* as the second main branch of philosophy. This means that the term *philosophia* in the second, third, and fourth paragraph of the *Divisio philosophie* needs to be understood as *philosophia speculativa*, not as *philosophia* in general.

2) Second, the fact that *physica* is understood as medicine has implications for the dating of the text in Additional 62130. It is well known that this understanding of *physica* was common, especially in Chartres, before the arrival of Aristotle's *Physics* in the Latin West after 1150.¹⁰ Indeed, it has been established that James of Venice (d. 1147) produced the so-called *translatio vetus* of Aristotle's *Physica* in the first half of the twelfth century.¹¹ Another sign that the anonymous author of the *Divisio philosophiae* was not acquainted with the Latin translations of the Aristotelian corpus is the fact that he does not mention anywhere the term *metaphysica*. Thus, we can conclude that he probably composed his text in the first half of the twelfth century.

As already mentioned, it is possible that the theoretical framework presented in the *Divisio philosophiae* was intended to provide a link between the division of the sciences and the particularly thorny biblical question of the supracelestial waters which was presented in the text that follows in the manuscript.¹² The prominent place afforded to *astronomia* among the quadriavial sciences in the *Divisio* seems to suggest such a link, even though this hypothesis cannot be proven with absolute certainty.

⁹ The impulse to equate *superior* with *speculativa* and *inferior* with *practica* is understandable, because William of Conches says precisely that in his glosses on Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, a text that the anonymous author knew, as already stated above. See GUILLELMI DE CONCHIS *Glosae super Boetium*, ed. NAUTA, p. 33: « Quia ergo omnis philosophia uel theorica uel practica est ... Sed quia theorica dignior est practica, ideo dicit in superiori margine esse intextum Θ et in inferiori Π. Ita habemus quare istae litterae in uestibus Philosophiae sint intextae et qualiter una superior, alia inferior ». Yet, the practical branch of philosophy is subdivided into *ethica*, *economica* and *politica*, topics that are completely missing from the text in Add. 62130.

¹⁰ See JEROME J. BYLEBYL, « The Medical Meaning of *Physica* », *Osiris*, 6 (1990), p. 16–41.

¹¹ See ARISTOTLE, *Physica. Translatio Vetus*, ed. FERNAND BOSSIER, JOZEF BRAMS, Brill, Leiden 1990 (Aristoteles Latinus, 7.1), p. XXI–XXII.

¹² See above, fn. 1 and 6.

III. Edition of the Text

Diuisio philosophie

Sicut communis philosophorum ratio testatur, philosophia in physicam, ethicam et logicam diuiditur. Philosophia in speculatiuam et practicam.¹³ Speculatiua uero que speculatur secundum indoles¹⁴ uel naturas rerum incorporearum existencium extra corpora, et dicitur theologia, uel naturas earum que sunt circa corpora, et dicitur mathematica, uel naturas ipsorum corporum, et dicitur physica.¹⁵

Secundum hanc diuisionem, philosophia¹⁶ alia superior, alia inferior. Superior uero duplex: alia que tractat de natura creatrice, ut theologia, alia de natura creata secundum qualitates et causas rebus inferioribus dominantes naturaliter, ut doctrina quadriuii, et per excellentiam astronomia. Inferior uero philosophia similiter duplex: alia est que tractat de effectibus naturarum in rebus secundum statum sibi competentem et compotem, ut theorica Ypocratis; alia de effectibus naturarum in rebus secundum permutationem passionum, et de remediis, ut practica Esculapii experimentalis.¹⁷

Rursus philosophia superior uniuersaliter tractat de principio nature, id est de motu <et> non mouente, de qualitate qualificata et non qualificante, de quantitate quantificata et non quantificante, de causa causata et non causante,¹⁸ et de ceteris proprietatibus nature create rebus inferioribus naturaliter dominantibus cum tempore. Philosophia uero inferior tractat de rebus naturalibus, id est de effectibus naturarum in rebus, de defectibus, de medicamentibus.

Vel philosophia superior de ipsa natura secundum se, id est secundum quod est causa rerum naturalium;¹⁹ philosophia inferior de effectibus nature in rebus secundum aliud, id est secundum quod res naturales create dicuntur. Non tamen

¹³ Cf. BOETHIUS, *De trinitate*, ch. 2, ed. GALONNIER, p. 136–139.

¹⁴ indoles] indos Ms.

¹⁵ Cf. THIERRY OF CHARTRES, *Lectiones in Boethii librum De trinitate*, pr. 4, ed. HÄRING, p. 126: « Sunt enim tres partes speculative: theologia cuius principium est de summo deo ... et est de incorporeis que sunt extra corpora: et mathematica cuius est principium de numeris ... et est de incorporeis que sunt circa corpora ...: et physica que est de ipsis corporibus et habet principium a quatuor elementis »; and GUILLELMI DE CONCHIS *Glosae super Boetium. In Consolationem*, I pr. 1, ed. NAUTA, p. 31: « Theoreticae similiter tres species: theologia, mathematica, physica. Et est theologia contemplatio incorporeorum quae sunt praeter corpora ... Mathematica uero est de his quae sunt circa corpora ... Physica uero est de proprietatibus corporum et qualitibus ».

¹⁶ philosophia] Ms in margine alia manu.

¹⁷ Cf. ISIDORE, *Etymologiae*, IV.4.1, ed. LINDSAY, unpaginated: « Secunda Enpirica, id est experientissima, inventa est ab Aesculapio, quae non indiciorum signis, sed solis constat experimentis. Tertia Logica, id est rationalis, inventa ab Hippocrate ».

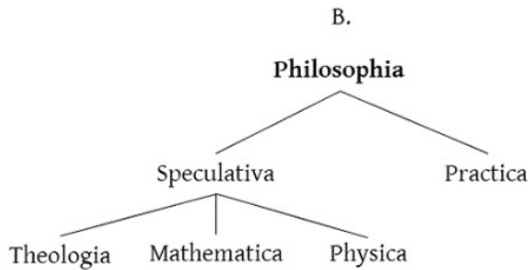
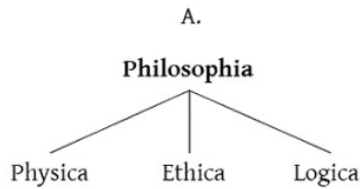
¹⁸ Cf. ERIUGENA, *Periphyseon*, 1, ed. JEAUNEAU, vol. I, p. 32–35.

¹⁹ Cf. Ibid., p. 22–23; cf. GUILLELMI DE CONCHIS *Glosae super Boetium. In Consolationem*, I m. 2, ed. NAUTA, p. 59: « Naturae rerum causae latent, quia solis phisicis comprehenduntur ».

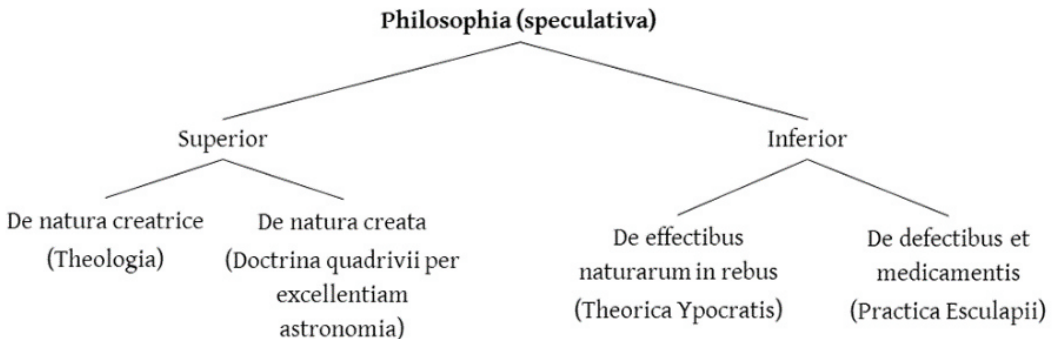
natura res naturales ex necessitate tales uel tales actualiter efficit, set aptas necessario natus ad aliud et ad aliud potencialiter instituit. Explicit.

Appendix: Division of Philosophy

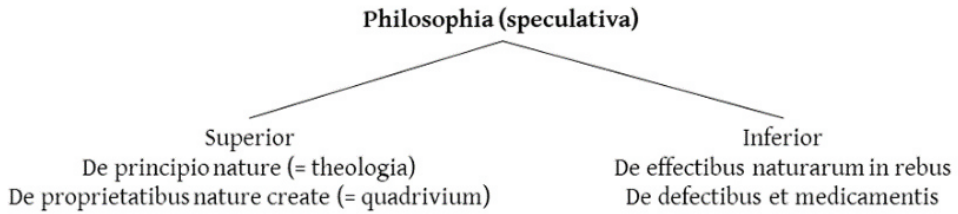
A and B represent the so-called Stoic/Boethian classification of the sciences. This is covered in the first paragraph of the *Divisio philosophie*.



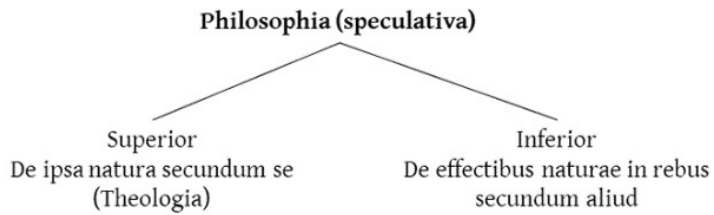
C. Second paragraph of the *Divisio philosophie*



D. Third paragraph of the *Divisio philosophie*



E. Fourth paragraph of the *Divisio philosophie*



LA TRASMISSIONE DELL' *ARS DIALECTICA*
TRA I SECOLI XV E XVI:
LORENZO VALLA E PIERRE DE LA RAMÉE

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE *ARS DIALECTICA*
AMONG THE 15TH AND 16TH CENTURIES:
LORENZO VALLA AND PIERRE DE LA RAMÉE

MICHELA SALSANO
UNIVERSITY OF SALERNO / UNIVERSITY FRANÇOIS RABELAIS, TOURS



I. *Translatio studiorum e trasmissione di contenuti*

La lunga fase di transizione convenzionalmente identificata dagli storici nei secoli XIV e XV rappresenta un periodo fluido nel quale maturarono progressivamente, nelle università europee, caratteristiche capaci di definire una nuova fase della storia del pensiero speculativo. In particolare, per quel che concerne le interpretazioni appartenenti al periodo rinascimentale, si è condotti al centro di polemiche vivaci che ne chiamano in causa la demarcazione, prima storica e conseguentemente speculativa. Le questioni che intercorrono tra Medioevo e Rinascimento si ancorarono, a loro volta, a quel legame di esperienze intellettuali che intessevano le trame tra i primi umanisti e la millenaria tradizione medievale. Nell'Europa dei secoli XV e XVI, le cui istituzioni erano fortemente sensibili all'invettiva contro i logici terministi e i barbari scoti e britanni, presero forma le coordinate all'interno delle quali venne elaborata la decostruzione delle sovrastrutture interpretative che avevano indebitamente ricoperto il pensiero aristotelico rispetto ai domini disciplinari delle *artes*. A buon diritto, la nascita delle università, la cui leggenda si consacra nelle pagine del *De tribus sensibus sacrae Scripturae* di Tommaso d'Irlanda, baccelliere in Teologia alla Sorbona nel 1306, contribuì alla centralizzazione del Sapere verso la polarizzazione dei maggiori centri di studio. Nonostante la lontananza rispetto al trentennio compreso tra il quarto Concilio Lateranense e il primo Concilio di Lione, il contesto accademico dei primi decenni dell'Umanesimo pagava ancora

pegno nei confronti di un ordinamento che aveva sancito la propria nascita al cospetto di quella *translatio studiorum* che si era compiuta tra la Grecia antica e l'Europa scolastica.¹

Per di più, la modernizzazione delle istituzioni universitarie, che avrebbe avuto un primo avvio a partire dal secolo XIV, produsse mutamenti profondi nell'arco dei due secoli successivi, che si riversarono di conseguenza sulla condizione di maestri e scolari, sui metodi didattici e sullo statuto scientifico delle discipline insegnate. A partire da tali mutamenti, caratterizzanti l'elaborazione culturale a cui appartenevano i capisaldi delle *humanae litterae* e degli *studia humanitatis*, si diffondeva un fitto operato scientifico.

Perfettamente estranee al contesto ecclesiastico del *clericus* medievale, le aule di uno studio pubblico creavano la possibilità di intessere una fitta rete di rapporti, rilanciando così il proprio magistero in diverse aree europee.² Grazie agli strumenti conoscitivi e metodologici propri dell'intervento dei maestri umanisti si moltiplicarono le discipline accademiche e aumentarono le cattedre disponibili, tra cui quelle di letteratura latina e greca, modificando così gli equilibri creati tra i diversi settori del sapere. L'ambito delle discipline filosofiche, la cui attività si riversava nel dominio di altri settori disciplinari, attraversò l'intero lavoro storico e filologico condotto sui testi greci e latini di carattere giuridico, medico e scientifico, rimettendo sempre il proprio operato critico al vaglio delle arti liberali.

Effettivamente, alla luce della questione del continuo scambio scientifico dipanatosi per cerchi concentrici dall'Italia verso l'Europa, nonché dell'intensa interazione tra dottrine (opposte o affini che fossero), era ancora forte l'eco di quella che convenzionalmente indichiamo ad oggi sotto la dicitura di *translatio studiorum*, presa nella sua valenza e connotazione storica prima ancora che culturale.³ Queste osservazioni preliminari svelano la necessità di porre un interrogativo e indagare in direzione della problematizzazione che esso veicola.

Quando facciamo riferimento alle dinamiche di trasmissione di saperi, stiamo già facendo riferimento all'essenza del periodo rinascimentale, il quale in sé incarna buona parte del significato originario di tale fenomeno. Basti pensare ai molteplici filtri interpretativi che hanno inciso sulla formazione del pensiero

¹ TOMMASO D'IRLANDA, *De tribus sensibus sacrae scripturae*, MS Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Lat. 15966, fol. 7vb (commento di Pv 9,1). Un ulteriore riferimento lo si trova in GIULIO D'ONOFRIO, *Vera philosophia: studi sul pensiero cristiano in età tardo-antica, alto-medievale e umanistica*, Città Nuova, Roma 2013 (Institutiones, 1), p. 131-137.

² Per una visione globale sul fenomeno, cf. MICHEL BIDEAUX, MARIE-MADALEINE FRAGONARD (eds.), *Les échanges entre les universités européennes à la Renaissance*, Droz, Genève 2003.

³ ÉDOUARD JEAUNEAU, 'Translatio studii'. *The Transmission of Learning: A Gilsonian Theme*, Pontifical Institute of medieval studies, Toronto 1995 (The Etienne Gilson Series, 18).

rinascimentale e quanti di essi sono stati il prodotto o il frutto di ulteriori trasmissioni, passando per quel filtro che fu, per esempio, la cultura araba.

II. Per un approccio storico al problema

Quando si pensa ai criteri di rinnovamento che fecero del Rinascimento la corrente che ad oggi è convenzionalmente conosciuta nel suo senso storico, culturale e scientifico, non si può fare a meno di pensare come e in che misura esso sia stato innanzitutto un momento di ritorno e riscoperta di testi e dottrine classiche. Fu proprio questa la caratteristica principale grazie alla quale possiamo parlare di un vero e proprio processo di trasmissione del sapere che attraversa un arco storico di non breve durata. Inoltre, non va trascurato un ulteriore aspetto del problema, ovvero quel comune denominatore che unifica parte di questi stessi criteri nella cultura Araba – filtro obbligato, attraverso il quale era stato setacciato il pensiero di alcune delle *auctoritates* ricostruite nel tempo.

Tuttavia, vuole essere mia premura mostrare in questa sede l'urgenza di una proposta d'indagine, volta all'arco tematico attinente al dominio scientifico della Logica e della Dialettica, che proceda a partire da un approccio storico facente riferimento alla *media aetas* degli *artistae*. Facendo leva sul concetto di trasmissione come sapere ri-formulato a partire da dottrine precedentemente date, è doveroso evidenziare quali furono le peculiarità del pensiero rinascimentale a partire da un *excursus* relativo alla contestualizzazione di quelle che furono le aspre polemiche contro la scolastica. È oltremodo risaputo come molti di questi autori si scagliassero con veemenza contro l'operato delle scuole delle *logicales artes*.

Questa analisi si avvia a partire da quel crocevia che vide l'incontro tra la logica aristotelica, la logica medievale e la logica dei *novatores* denominata classica e inoltre, tenendo ben presente quanto il pensiero logico medievale fosse ancora poco noto alla letteratura secondaria fino agli studi svolti durante la prima metà del secolo scorso, mentre il resto dei manoscritti restava affidato all'oblio delle biblioteche e all'indifferenza dei logici moderni. Fu l'opera di Karl Von Prantl a porre la questione in merito alla ricostruzione di un vissuto speculativo che si muoveva su un filone tecnico specifico come quello della Logica.⁴ In un momento in cui era fortemente radicata l'idea secondo cui la logica aristotelica, la logica medievale e logica classica venivano accomunate in

⁴ Per un'ampia trattazione in merito, in cui si segnala anche la posizione di Józef Maria Bocheński che riconoscerà alla logica medievale quella fisionomia particolare annoverabile tra la logica greca e la logica matematica contemporanea, si veda: CESARE VASOLI, « La logica europea nell'età dell'Umanesimo e del Rinascimento », in *Atti del convegno di storia della logica. Parma, 8-10 Novembre 1972*, Liviana, Padova 1974 (Collana di testi e saggi, 4), p. 61-94.

un'unica dottrina, si intravedevano solo poche eccezioni lessicali e alcune differenze di espressioni o di vocabolario.

Già presso le *facultates artium* prendeva forma un *curriculum studiorum* all'interno del quale la logica era posta tra gli insegnamenti propedeutici alle facoltà superiori, di Teologia, Diritto e Medicina. Le discussioni e i conflitti più rilevanti dell'epoca si insinuarono spesso in quel rinnovamento dell'approccio speculativo al sapere teologico che faceva uso degli strumenti dialettici. Da ciò si desume chiaramente che la logica operava su due livelli, l'uno proprio delle Facoltà che se ne servivano come strumento della prassi argomentativa, e l'altro relativo al campo degli *artista*, i quali effettivamente facevano uso della terminologia e degli utensili della dialettica in quanto tale, intesa come arsenale contenente gli strumenti attraverso i quali l'argomentazione prende forma. Alle fredde *calculations*, dunque, veniva legata la pretesa di disvelare i *mysteria divina*, cosicché alla componente logica veniva attribuito il fine di superare l'impenetrabilità delle più alte questioni metafisiche. La disputa degli universali, per esempio, occupa certamente un posto di spicco nell'addentellato di controversie filosofiche del Medioevo, evocando a sé la problematica ontologica che funge da cortina di tornasole della corrispondenza tra tre dimensioni: *ordo rerum*, *ordo verborum* e *ordo idearum*, traducibile in quel calcolo inquieto volto a comprendere se i termini universali fossero *ante rem*, *in re*, o *post rem*. Il problema posto anticipatamente da Porfirio, all'inizio dell'*Isagoge*, e rinviato poi ai metafisici, attraversa l'intero arco temporale che giunge fino alla fine della tarda Scolastica, sfiorando le scuole del realismo e del nominalismo, in quella affannosa ricerca di una collocazione semantica dei concetti tra *scientia sermocinalis* e *scientia rationalis*.⁵

Non da meno fu l'esposizione della dottrina aristotelica, la quale assumeva delle connotazioni differenti, soprattutto per quel che concerneva l'uso delle regole atte alla costruzione di schemi sillogistici conclusivi. Uno degli esempi più eclatanti riportati dalla letteratura odierna, è il sillogismo *Barbara* enunciato da Aristotele nel seguente modo: se *A* appartiene a ogni *B* e *B* a ogni *C*, allora *A* appartiene a ogni *C*.⁶ Sulle orme di Boezio, i medievali avevano adottato la formulazione dei sillogismi come schemi di inferenza, pertanto la loro esposizione veniva configurata in questo modo: ogni *A* è *B*, ogni *C* è *A*, dunque ogni *C* è *B*.⁷ Ciò che gli autori medievali come Buridano, Ockham, Alberto di

⁵ ROBERT BLANCHÉ, *La logica e la sua storia da Aristotele a Russell*, Ubaldini, Roma 1973 (Le grandi opere), p. 149–158; See ALAIN DE LIBERA, *La Querelle des universaux. De Platon à la fin du Moyen Âge (Des travaux)*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1996.

⁶ A tal proposito, uno sguardo alle Leggi di De Morgan permette una comprensione in riferimento alle differenze delle modalità di espressione del linguaggio logico nella storia. Pertanto si veda: BLANCHÉ, *La logica e la sua storia da Aristotele a Russell*, p. 158.

⁷ Cf. *Ibidem*.

Sassonia descrivevano non era altro che la rappresentazione di enunciati attraverso le sole proposizioni, senza un uso specifico di alcun linguaggio simbolico. Al contrario si servivano di un vocabolario preso dalle traduzioni di Avicenna, stabilendo la gerarchia delle intenzioni, da cui seguirono i lemmi specifici di *prima intentio* e *secunda intentio*.⁸ Con la prima si intende l'atto intellettuale diretto, con il quale il nostro pensiero apprende un oggetto, mentre la seconda denota quell'atto intellettuale riflessivo che prende a oggetto l'intenzione prima, ossia il nostro stesso pensiero del primo oggetto; da cui ne conseguirono l'individuazione dell'uso significativo e l'uso autonomo di un vocabolo, alla luce di quelle teorie definite delle *suppositiones*.⁹

III. *Il processo di trasmissione dei saperi a partire dall'auctoritas aristotelica*

Volgere lo sguardo al lascito della scolastica in modo puntuale, ci permette di introdurre un discorso particolare relativo a due autori della tradizione come Lorenzo Valla e Pierre de la Ramée (d'ora in avanti Ramus), che si scagliavano, con poca clemenza, contro i lavori che avevano inaridito il pensiero dello Stagirita. L'insopprimibile vicinanza tra la cura della lingua e le responsabilità inconsce dei fondatori delle *universitates* veicolava il bersaglio preferito di ardite polemiche, lasciando così fluire solo la parte esterna della logica medievale, intesa come unica componente visibile, quasi come se fosse un rivestimento scolastico perdurato nella logica denominata classica. Fu questo stesso paradigma, qualche secolo più avanti, a offuscare l'impianto logico aristotelico, che si presumeva dovesse tramandare le formule sillogistiche, filtrate non solo attraverso l'operato delle scuole, ma anche attraverso il ritorno, del quale si è ormai a conoscenza, delle traduzioni dei commentatori arabi. I paradigmi di pensiero legati ai due autori in questione sembrano convergere in un punto comune che indica la perfetta coincidenza con il problema esposto finora: la trasmissione del pensiero logico di Aristotele, che funge da aspetto sotteso, ma tutt'altro che di poco conto. Nelle *Praelectiones*, Ramus ci dona un riferimento preciso nel tentativo di disporre le coordinate lungo le quali è possibile muoversi:

⁸ Per un approfondimento in merito alle questioni tecniche della logica e dialettica scolastica, si veda: LAMBERTUS MARIE DE RIJK, « Teoria semantica nella logica del secondo Medioevo. Le origini della teoria delle proprietà dei termini », in NORMAN KRETZMANN, ANTHONY KENNY, JAN PINBORG (eds.), *Logica nel Medioevo* (= *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, parts III-V), trans. PIERLUIGI FIORINI, Jaca Book, Milano 1999 (Biblioteca di Cultura Medievale), p. 71-84; CORRADO MANGIONE, SERGIO BOZZI, *Storia della logica. Da Boole ai nostri giorni*, Garzanti, Milano 1993.

⁹ Per la teoria delle *suppositiones*, oramai desueta a causa del decaduto uso della lingua latina, il cui comportamento grammaticale e sintattico è diverso da quello dell'italiano corrente, si veda: PAUL VINCENT SPADE, « La semantica dei termini », in KRETZMANN, KENNY, PINBORG (eds.), *Logica nel Medioevo*, p. 103-113; FRÉDÉRIC GOUBIER, « La teoria della supposizione e le sue cronologie semantiche », *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica*, 101 (2009), p. 501-532.

Valla libro 3. putat hanc artem primum ab Aristotele logicam fuisse appellatam. Utriusque autem nominis eadem vis est, cum *dialeghestai* et *logizesthai* idem significant.¹⁰

Ramus si focalizza su questo aspetto per mostrare come Valla, tra le righe della *Dialectica*, riportasse che era stato Aristotele a utilizzare per la prima volta il termine ‘dialettica’, e di conseguenza, ad applicare il suo statuto epistemologico di dottrina. Nei suoi testi tardi, infatti, Ramus adotta una condotta di pensiero accomodante nei riguardi della possibile concordanza del pensiero platonico con quello aristotelico, nell’indicare un tassello di comunanza nell’utilizzo dei lemmi ‘dialettica’ e ‘logica’, per significare tutte le forze *vim* del discorso¹¹. Nello strutturare la teoria della vis, l’umanista piccardo rappresenta la forza argomentativa, essenzialmente ispirata per mezzo di questo impeto, volta al disvelamento del vero. Il tutto, situando però la dialettica stessa al di fuori del campo della probabilità, poiché tale lemma non interverrà mai nell’estimazione di una definizione del termine dialettica né del suo corrispettivo statuto scientifico, in quanto la sua indagine dialettica è essenzialmente una ricerca del vero. La ricerca in merito allo statuto scientifico della dialettica percorre questa via che riguarda la pertinenza della probabilità, infatti nel terzo libro della *Dialectica* del Valla vi è esplicitato che:

Dialectica ab Aristotele, ut Boetius quoque testatur, dicta est facultas per probabilia colligendi, logica per vera et necessaria. Utriusque nomine diffiniri solet diligens ratio disserendi.¹²

Questo parallelismo intercetta un segmento speculativo significativo tra i due autori che ci permette di proseguire distinguendo i termini del problema. Infatti, il blocco diaframmatico che si interpone tra l’eredità della scolastica e la

¹⁰ *Petri Ramii Eloquentiae et Philosophiae professoris Regii Institutionum Dialecticarum Praefatio, ad Carolum Lotharingum, Cardinalem*, Parigi, M. David, 1550, p. 13, n. 3 [corsivo mio]. La medesima citazione è ripresa nel lavoro di Nelly Bruyère (si veda la nota seguente) in merito alla trattazione della dialettica naturale intesa come forza dello spirito umano in grado di operare in quanto facoltà del *disserere*. Proprio in questo passaggio viene espresso il problema implicito legato alla trasmissione di questa stessa nozione, passata sotto la penna araba e giunta fino all’occidente. Problema che, per altro, viene affrontato dallo stesso Valla nella *Repastinatio Dialecticae et Philosophiae* (d’ora in avanti, *Dialectica*): cf. LORENZO VALLA, *Dialectical Disputations*, ed. and trans. BRIAN P. COPENHAVER, LODI NAUTA, 2 vols., Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2012 (I Tatti Renaissance Library, 49–59), vol. II, p. 210–211. Segnalo inoltre l’edizione del testo latino di cui si dispone: cf. LAURENTII VALLE *Repastinatio dialectice et philosophie*, ed. GIANNI ZIPPEL, 2 vols., Antenore, Padova 1982.

¹¹ NELLY BRUYÈRE, *Méthode et Dialectique dans l’oeuvre de La Ramée: Renaissance et âge classique*, Vrin, Paris 1984 (De Pétrarque à Descartes, 45), p. 217.

¹² LORENZO VALLA, *Dialectica* III.1, ed. COPENHAVER–NAUTA, vol. II, p. 210.

ricezione delle dottrine che le appartenevano, trasmesse agli intellettuali rinascimentali, è uno dei nodi nevralgici su cui prese forma l'esercizio critico di Lorenzo Valla, il quale attraversò il filtro linguistico tra l'*auctoritas* dominante e i diversi modi in cui essa veniva tradotta, studiata e riproposta¹³. Basti pensare all'influsso dei commentatori arabi di Aristotele e all'impatto che, a loro volta, ebbero sulle dottrine dei pensatori europei. Gli effetti della collisione che ne conseguì, tra i diversi orientamenti di pensiero, in area mediterranea – anticamera di incubazione della tradizione dialettica, la quale recava in sé dei 'virus linguistici' destinati a emergere solo in futuro – ricaddero su diverse dispute teologiche, ontologiche e metafisiche.¹⁴ Fu proprio tra le trame di questo contesto che, alla fine del secolo XV, quando si contavano in Europa sessantatré università – senza chiaramente far riferimento esplicito a quelle secondarie e alle scuole di grammatica e di diritto che presero piede soprattutto in Italia e nel sud dell'Europa – si insinua la questione in merito alla ricezione del pensiero logico di Aristotele.

Va considerato che dalla tarda antichità all'età moderna, la logica antica veniva identificata per gran parte con la sillogistica aristotelica. Tuttavia la teoria avanzata dagli studiosi è attualmente a un punto di svolta, da cui emerge come, negli ultimi due secoli soprattutto, si sia rivelato veritiero che la logica antica in quanto teoria del sillogismo si è ampliata con la riscoperta della sillogistica stoica come alternativa alla logica aristotelica. Quanto a quest'ultima, essa sarebbe oramai considerata come frammento del calcolo dei predicati della logica classica. Inoltre va aggiunto che il campo della logica antica si sia riscoperto essere più ricco che non la semplice teoria del sillogismo, facendo dunque riferimento alla dialettica filosofica dei *Topici* aristotelici o al forte interesse esercitato dai grandi paradossi logici della logica megarico-stoica.¹⁵

Nell'avallare questa tesi, potremmo osservare che l'aristotelismo del Rinascimento non fu una mera continuazione di quello medievale, in quanto bisogna pensare alla diversità di attitudini di metodo e di analisi del *corpus*

¹³ LODI NAUTA, *In Defense of Common Sense: Lorenzo Valla's Humanist Critique of Scholastic Philosophy*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2009 (I Tatti studies in Italian Renaissance History), p. 268.

¹⁴ Per un approfondimento si rimanda a due lavori che analizzano nello specifico le ripercussioni delle dinamiche linguistiche seguite all'intervento arabo: JEAN-FRANÇOIS MONTEIL, « La transmission d'Aristote par les Arabes à la Chrétienté occidentale. Une trouvaille relative au *De Interpretatione* », *Rivista Española de Filosofía Medieval*, 11 (2004), p. 181–195; LAHCEN E. EZZAHER, « Alfarabi's Book of Rhetoric: An Arabic-English translation of Alfarabi's Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric », in *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, 26/4 (2008), p. 347–391.

¹⁵ BARBARA BARTOCCI, « Dialectical Reasoning and Topical Argument in the Middle Ages: An Inquiry into the Commentaries on Aristotle's *Topics* (1250–1500) », Ph.D. Diss. Université François Rabelais Tours 2017, p. 37–52. Per un ulteriore approfondimento si veda anche LORENZO POZZI, *La bottega del barbiere. Tre studi sul paradosso*, Zara, Parma 1982 (Quaderni di Filosofia. Università degli studi di Parma, Istituto di filosofia, 5).

Aristotelicum, che fecero dell'aristotelismo di quei secoli, un fenomeno europeo e non semplicemente un movimento filosofico.¹⁶ È fuori dubbio che la metodologia e le aspirazioni degli aristotelici umanisti in Italia durante il secolo XV ebbero una chiara risonanza attraverso il resto d'Europa, designando così quel doppio legame di scambio, elaborato e facilitato lungo gli assi comunicanti instauratisi tra i maggiori centri di studio e ambienti accademici. A partire dalle grandi matrici dell'aristotelismo scolastico, averroista e occamista, prende le mosse quel filone logico che si avvaleva oramai dell'*Organon* ricostruito, ma del quale venne mantenuto il corpo dottrinale, che si insegnava nelle scuole con il nome di Logica, declinatosi nella veste sillogistica dell'*Organon* stesso, tutta incentrata sugli *Analitici* e i *Topici*.¹⁷

Potremmo dunque essere spinti ad avanzare un'ipotesi circa le rifiniture che vennero apportate alla logica nel pieno del secolo XV, che si pongono in perfetta continuità con l'evo successivo, e che ci condurrebbero a intuire che il pensiero degli autori che vi appartennero non andrebbe gestito come un contenitore vuoto semplicemente arricchito di abbellimenti stilistici di secondaria rilevanza, quanto piuttosto come una vera e propria struttura riordinata e semplificata, in grado di colmare, almeno in parte, il famoso vuoto tanto decantato dalle teorie di alcuni storici del pensiero logico.¹⁸

L'*auctoritas summorum auctorum*, posta al vaglio della riforma della lingua, si sottoponeva alla semplificazione dell'insegnamento della logica, la quale era a sua volta oggetto di un'imperversante innovazione linguistica, nonché allo slittamento delle dottrine semantiche verso i primi cenni di pragmatismo.¹⁹ Sopraggiunse dunque un repentino cambio di prospettiva, secondo cui l'acquisizione del sapere non prendeva più le mosse dall'analisi della correttezza formale e quantitativa delle proposizioni, che si ponevano come questioni centrali per la tradizione della *logica modernorum*, quanto piuttosto si fondava sulla semplificazione delle modalità di accesso e gestione delle informazioni, sulla loro possibilità di sintesi e definizione, entro quadri sistematici sempre più ampi

¹⁶ CHARLES B. SCHMITT, *Aristote et la Renaissance*, trans. LUCE GIARD, Presses universitaires de France, Paris 1992 (Épiméthée); MARCO SGARBI, « Aristotle and the People; Vernacular Philosophy in Renaissance Italy », *Renaissance and Reformation*, 39/3 (2016), p. 59–109.

¹⁷ Per una visione d'insieme sulla ricezione dell'*Organon* aristotelico, si veda la sezione dedicata alle opere logiche nel lavoro sistematico di ALBERTO JORI, *Aristotele*, Bruno Mondadori, Milano, 2003 (Sintesi), p. 53–122. Per la ricezione di Aristotele nel XV secolo, si veda *Quattrocento Aristotle*, a c. di BARBARA BARTOCCI, ANDREA ROBIGLIO, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2020 (Temi metafisici e problemi del pensiero antico).

¹⁸ BLANCHÉ, « La logica e la sua storia », p. 194.

¹⁹ Per un approfondimento introduttivo in merito all'approccio pragmatista si veda WILLIAM JAMES, *Pragmatismo. Un nome nuovo per vecchi modi di pensare*, trad. SERGIO FRANZESE, Il Saggiatore, Milano 1994 (Biblioteca delle Silerchie, 152).

e generali.²⁰ In altri termini, fin dalle *Summulae logicales* di Pietro Ispano – e poi per autori come Buridano o anche Ockham – il problema principale della Dialettica, per oltre due secoli, era stato quello di esaminare le funzioni del linguaggio, sulla base delle strutture inferenziali e sillogistiche, valutando i rapporti tra i termini e i concetti che questi dovevano esprimere.

A tal proposito Nancy Struever fa cenno a una rivoluzione linguistica, da cui dipende il rapido e crescente incremento dei contenuti e delle acquisizioni culturali che determinò il carattere problematico del linguaggio preso nella sua accezione simbolica e funge da tassello mediatore perfettamente inserito all'interno della teoria del triangolo semiotico di Ogden e Richards.²¹ Tale problematicità chiama a sé un ulteriore aspetto, che vede il crollo di ogni certezza o congruenza tra parola ed essere e un sistema di segni e riferimenti ormai fortemente destabilizzato. Le vie d'uscita a tale crisi linguistica, proposte da Cesare Vasoli in uno dei suoi lavori, sarebbero due. In primo luogo, una soluzione viene individuata nella spinta verso il formalismo e il simbolismo logico, proprio delle logiche scolastiche, tutte sensibili all'influenza di Ockham e fondate sul presupposto che il linguaggio media e simbolizza il reale, ma senza mai rappresentarlo, non potendone essere suo equivalente. In secondo luogo, sussiste il concetto umanistico di discorso, inteso come elemento operativo, soprattutto nell'ambito dei rapporti interumani legati alla capacità pragmatica e all'efficacia che lo rendono uno strumento atto a raccogliere, riordinare e disporre, le nozioni necessarie per chi agisce nella società civile e si occupa dei suoi uffici.²² Su questa scia nasce la nuova definizione della Dialettica come metodo, cioè come via ordinata e progressiva tale da perseguire e organizzare il sapere, comportando una riorganizzazione dell'ambito di competenza e applicazione della Dialettica in quanto tale, atta non già a ridefinire i singoli spazi semantici dei termini, ma a mostrare e dimostrare i legami e l'ordine generale del discorso, volti all'unificazione del ragionamento.

La positiva innovazione valliana rispetto alla concezione medievale della lingua latina operò quell'ardito spostamento semantico del significato intellettualistico di natura di una lingua. Così facendo, l'autore delle *Elegantiae latinae linguae* applicò al concetto di *natura* o *ratio* della lingua un senso storico convenzionale, da cui deriva una volontà non normativa ma descrittiva, ovvero quella volontà di ricostruire un grande affresco della lingua latina classica,

²⁰ MARIANGELA REGOLIOSI (ed.), *Lorenzo Valla, La riforma della lingua e della logica*, Polistampa, Firenze 2010 (Edizione nazionale delle opere di Lorenzo Valla. Strumenti, 3).

²¹ Cf. CHARLES K. OGDEN, I. A. RICHARDS (eds.), *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism*, 8th ed., Harcourt – Brace, New York 1956. Cf. NANCY STRUEVER, « Lorenzo Valla's Grammar of Subject and Object. An Ethical Inquiry », in *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 (1987), p. 239–267.

²² CESARE VASOLI, *La dialettica e la retorica dell'Umanesimo: invenzione e metodo nella cultura del XIV e XV secolo*, Feltrinelli, Milano 1968, p. 67–68 (I fatti et le idee. Saggi e biografie, 174).

radicalmente basato su una triplice dimensione. In primo luogo vi era la ricezione delle *auctoritates* e di un'accurata opera di traduzione nel rispetto della tradizione, in secondo luogo invece il principio di *aequitas*, ovvero l'equilibrio atto a garantire la trasmissione senza preclusioni delle nascenti teorie, e in fine dell'*aequalitas*, della giusta proporzione finalizzata a non selezionare le conoscenze aprioristicamente. Da ciò segue che lo scopo delle *Elegantiae* non era quello di redigere un apparato normativo paradigmatico, ma quello di presentare l'uso prevalente degli Autori, soprattutto dei prosatori, mostrando così il debito contratto con il pensiero di Quintiliano e Cicerone, appellandosi al classicismo radicale e all'uso di una lingua ormai remota.²³ In altri termini, le volontà non normative ma descrittive dell'umanista romano spendono i loro criteri in favore di un'acquisizione linguistica fondata sulla *consuetudo* e sull'*usus*. Su questo livello dell'indagine valliana si innesta il problema in merito allo statuto della Logica, che ne diviene un discorso consequenziale e imprescindibile. Com'è stato già affermato, a più riprese, il rapporto che il Valla ebbe nei confronti delle fonti filosofiche e teologiche tardo-antiche e medievali, si volse alla costante ricerca di individuazione dei debiti, scarti e innovazioni rispetto alle scuole dei secoli precedenti.

IV. Lo statuto scientifico della Dialettica

Quello che si delinea, a partire dalle componenti sottese alle vicende proprie del contesto al quale il Valla apparteneva, non è altro che una strettissima connessione tra linguaggio e Logica, presa come insieme di elementi operazionali del discorso, il cui patto linguistico determina la funzione veritativa delle parole, ed è convenzionalmente sancito da quell'accordo semiotico, appartenente a un contesto sociale specifico, in cui l'*usus* è il motore del processo di significazione dei *verba*; o meglio è nella lingua in quanto patto sociale la garanzia stessa della verità dei termini. Così, la *veritas verborum* coincide con la *veterum consuetudo*, nel senso che la verità di ogni parola, convenzionalmente stabilita dall'uomo *artifex*, consiste nel mantenimento dell'accordo permanente del patto linguistico, di cui si parlava pocanzi. Siffatta teoria si scontra violentemente contro il sistema logico della scolastica, secondo cui il fondamento del discorso scientifico era costituito dai capisaldi tecnici quali predicati universali, termini trascendentali e le categorie, i quali si prestavano come i principi del discorso, incarnando quel rapporto cogente tra logica e metafisica, dal momento che il linguaggio e le parti

²³ SALVATORE I. CAMPOREALE, *Lorenzo Valla: Umanesimo e Teologia*, Istituto nazionale di studi sul Rinascimento, Firenze 1972.

del discorso (*ordo verborum*), ricercano criteri di corrispondenza con la struttura ontologica del mondo (*ordo rerum*).²⁴

Imboccando la *vis significandi*, l'umanista romano ricorda che un discorso è corretto se rispetta la *verborum sermonique intelligentia*, ovvero se rispetta la comprensione assoluta delle parole, contrariamente a quanto avveniva per i lemmi utilizzati dalla scolastica, e che avevano la pretesa di soddisfare le esigenze del discorso corretto. Quei termini nuovamente orientati a esprimere realtà ontologiche, che intendono 'dire' le dieci categorie (*essentia* o *sustantia*, *qualitas*, *quantitas*) con valori logico-semantiche diversi dal senso comune all'interno del latino e quindi le strutture portanti della logica e della metafisica Scolastica sono in realtà definite come forme mostruose prive di senso, pertanto non sono parole ma neoformazioni verbali che non significano nulla, dunque possono essere ritenute puri suoni destituiti di valore umano, come versi gracchianti di animali.

Continuando su questo filone, grazie alla sapiente guida di Giovanni Aurispa, Lorenzo Valla poté condurre una vasta attività speculativa, teologica oltre che filosofica, portando in auge diverse illustrazioni inerenti i principali errori di lessico più tenaci. Proprio mentre l'attenzione dei molti sapienti europei era rivolta saldamente al Concilio di Ferrara Firenze, l'umanista faceva notare che il linguaggio, inteso come tramite di qualsiasi forma di comunicazione e trasmissione di cultura, fosse allo stesso tempo causa di forti fraintendimenti, da cui seguivano devastanti sovrapposizioni di significato, producendo così un fenomeno di alienazione del significato originario rispetto al suo referente semiotico. È proprio a causa di questo processo di alienazione che le singole parti del discorso, intese come veicoli primari di senso, vanno incontro a una lenta cristallizzazione di forme prive di significato, da cui è conseguito un distacco dalle intenzioni originarie, tradite dal passaggio di diverse lingue e gerghi.²⁵

Ciò che Valla vuol fare emergere dal proprio pensiero è la valenza dello studio della parola in quanto tale, intesa come unico strumento in grado di restituire al processo più intimo della significazione la sua originaria *impositio*. Per applicare il metodo di rifondazione della prassi linguistica, secondo il *diligens lector quintiliani*, occorre ritornare ai fondamenti del sapere, al fine di rivolgersi allo studio di quelle opere che erano riconosciute come *auctoritates* trasmesse dal passato²⁶. A partire da questo presupposto, viene operata una restaurazione umanistica della *Latinitas* classica, la quale mira a restituire al *sermo latinus* la sua dignità. Va pertanto precisato che, quando Valla fa riferimento al *sermo latinus* in quanto tale,

²⁴ MARCO LAFFRANCHI, *Dialettica e filosofia in Lorenzo Valla*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 1999 (Scienze Filosofiche, 66), p. 164-179.

²⁵ CESARE VASOLI, «La teologia dell'Umanesimo italiano nel primo Quattrocento», in GIULIO D'ONOFRIO (ed.), *Storia della Teologia*, vol. III: *La teologia delle scuole*, Piemme, Casale Monferrato 1996, p. 25-72.

²⁶ NAUTA, *In Defense of Common Sense*, p. 288.

prende in esame la critica rivolta alla manualistica medievale e alla didattica comprendente gli insegnamenti di grammatica e logica, sapientemente e minuziosamente riposta tra le pagine di trattati e *summulae*. Da cui segue che la vasta composizione della tradizione dialettico-retorica, che vantava la compresenza dei paradigmi aristotelico, ciceroniano, quintiliano e stoico, era sopravvissuta lungo i secoli, godendo di un discreto consenso, la cui precettistica era stata studiata fino al secolo XV.

Dall'introduzione nell'occidente latino della *Rhetorica* di Aristotele, nel secolo XIII, sotto forma di traduzioni di commentari arabi, dal conseguente dibattito suscitato in merito allo statuto epistemologico rispetto alle altre scienze, dalla testimonianza nel breve trattato di Egidio Romano, *De differentia rhetorica, etichae et politicae*, si intravede l'asse comunicante che dalla fine del Medioevo attraversava la concezione della insopprimibile vicinanza tra la cura della lingua e cura della tradizione.²⁷ La spinta decisa e cruciale di certo anti-aristotelismo rinascimentale, il cui posto è destinato ad assumere un ruolo delicato, che avanza sul filo di un'ambivalenza interpretativa data dai maggiori studiosi, nel tentativo di decifrare le intenzionalità reali di un pedantismo il cui stendardo si faceva portavoce di una critica al principio di autorità, si pone, non già, come mera *pars destruens*, quanto piuttosto sotto forma di esercizio critico la cui avversione era vista come una forma di cautela nei confronti dell'eredità classica, manomessa dalla scolastica.

In realtà, « la progenie peripatetica amante di quisquilie » soccombeva a quel costante rimprovero di tradimento nei confronti della *natura loquendi*, ovvero la struttura del linguaggio alla quale si conforma il parlare corrente dei colti e delle persone comuni, sia nella conversazione quotidiana che negli scritti. Infatti, stando all'operato di chi come Valla era stato revisore della versione latina di Girolamo della *Vulgata*, tutte le formulazioni sillogistiche completamente estranee al *vulgaris sermo* e avulse dall'integrità e coerenza interna della lingua avevano subito una perdita di senso, facendo perdere così efficienza al discorso argomentativo. La formalizzazione logica del linguaggio, articolata secondo *regulae logicae*, tra cui *proprietates* proposizionali e terministiche, si contrapponeva alla prassi linguistica, proprio perché tale modello didattico minava l'integrità della lingua comune e pretendeva di sovrapporsi al primato del *vulgaris sermo*.

Era così che il firmatario del *De falso credita et ementita Constantini donatione* si opponeva ai grammatici e ai dialettici scolastici delle *Summulae*, fondando l'intera speculazione dei propri lavori sull'elaborazione di un metodo storico-filologico, suffragato sul duplice principio della linguistica quintiliana: *consuetudo* e

²⁷ Nel commento alla *Rhetorica* di Aristotele, Egidio Romano insiste sul legame intercorso tra retorica, etica e politica, cf. LAFFRANCHI, *Dialettica e Filosofia*, p. 7.

analogia. La soluzione valliana, circa la natura e i fondamenti del linguaggio, attingeva da quel sodalizio tra intellettuali, ponendo attenzione alla *Institutio Oratoria* tra le cui righe erano state incise le basi costitutive del linguaggio: la *ratio*, la *vetustas*, l'*auctoritas*, la *consuetudo*.²⁸ L'intimo rapporto con Quintiliano conduce l'umanista verso un'analisi morfologica e semantica, il cui approdo sarà quello di de-ontologizzare il lessico scolastico, in cui l'*usus* della lingua, parola e referente, *verba* e *res*, non rimandano in alcun modo a una ulteriore dimensione ontica del linguaggio stesso. In ragion di ciò *verba et res* non possono essere accettate in alcun modo in senso metafisico, senza pervertire l'uso del *sermo communis*. Per evitare qualsiasi possibile richiamo di similitudine, sulla soglia di tale affermazione, va anzitutto chiarito che lo strumento della critica valliana non ha funzione analitico-concettuale, quanto piuttosto assume una connotazione linguistico-semantica.

La revisione critica operata dal Valla, nella *Repastinatio dialectice et philosophie*,²⁹ è rivolta alla sezione logica dell'aristotelismo scolastico, condotta mediante un'analisi delle varie forme proposizionali e dell'intera sillogistica.³⁰ L'asse intorno a cui costruisce l'intero apparato analitico si snoda in tre punti. Il primo riguarda l'analisi attraverso prove retorico grammaticali – a partire da alcuni termini trascendentali intesi come luoghi primari di articolazione del significato – operando la *reductio* della *res* e la *retractatio* dell'*esse*. Il secondo concerne la critica della logica modale che ritroviamo nel libro secondo della *Dialectica*. Infine, il terzo, riguarda l'indagine sistematica delle strutture formali della dimostrazione necessaria (sillogismo categorico e ipotetico) o di quella probabile (induzione ed epicherema). Il primo libro, nel quale l'umanista aveva sottoposto a *repastinatio* le nozioni del dibattito ontologico, opera criticamente una revisione del linguaggio metafisico aristotelico-scolastico, attraverso la duplice *reductio* riguardante la *res* e l'*esse*, per procedere poi con il riassetto dei Generi in cui si ramifica l'albero di Porfirio. Il contenuto metafisico del primo libro non è finalizzato a mettere in discussione la validità delle strutture inferenziali o dei riferimenti assiomatici, ma impegna il sistema tradizionale in uno stringente confronto topico-argomentativo, da cui prende le mosse la tesi di partenza del Valla, che risiede nell'interpretare l'esigenza retorica di ciascuna corrispondenza univoca tra il singolo *dictum* e la *res* indicata dal discorso, qualsiasi sia il suo genere. Una posizione dunque molto lontana rispetto alla Scolastica del nominalismo, in cui la *suppositio terminorum* reggeva, con le proprie peculiarità logiche, il delicato rapporto *subiecto* – *verba*, tale da impugnare la

²⁸ CHRISTOPHER S. CELENZA, « Lorenzo Valla and the Traditions and Transmissions of Philosophy », *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 66/4 (2005), p. 483–506.

²⁹ LORENZO VALLA, *Dialectica*, ed. COPENHAVER–NAUTA, vol. II, p. 397–415.

³⁰ Cf. SCHMITT, *Aristote et la Renaissance*, p. 77, 135–141.

preminenza della referenza sulla significazione, a cui erano subordinate le altre *proprietates terminorum*, quali *appellatio*, *ampliatio* e *restrictio*.³¹

V. L'analisi del linguaggio e l'argomentazione scientifica

Nell'Agosto del 1441, esattamente due anni dopo la prima edizione della *Dialectica*, Lorenzo Valla, filosofo severo e filologo tagliente, prestava l'inchiostro della sua penna alle righe di una risposta epistolare destinata all'amico Giovanni Tortelli. Esortato da questi alla prudenza, il professore di eloquenza presso lo *Studium Urbis* replicava nei pungenti toni che oramai gli erano stati ampiamente riconosciuti, affermando che aveva osato prendersi gioco di Boezio, proprio per non menzionare gli altri dialettici, che commisero errori anche peggiori raccolti poi dai Filosofi, i quali avevano dedicato, a loro volta, del tempo ad attività speculative senza senso in merito alle scienze naturali, causando così quel vuoto legato al dominio epistemologico della metafisica, che consisteva in un problema linguistico legato alla parola e al corrispettivo significato di *quiditas*, *essentia*, *esse*, *ens*. Il Valla dunque non aveva fatto altro che mostrare come questi lemmi fossero folli e privi di forza argomentativa, e se solo lo Stagirita lo avesse compreso a sua volta, non avrebbe mai offerto agli altri così tanto materiale folle³².

L'urto che si crea nell'incontro tra le dinamiche appartenute a secoli differenti mette in evidenza il punto di gravità della logica, che riguarda l'analisi del linguaggio concernente l'argomentazione scientifica, che nelle opere del Valla viene introdotta a partire dall'*auctoritas* aristotelica in merito alla natura del sillogismo:

Syllogismus est oratio in qua, concessis quibusdam, aliud quid quam quae concessa sunt, per ea quae concessa sunt necessario conficitur.³³

In perfetta continuità metodica rispetto ai contenuti del primo libro della *Dialectica*, Valla opera alcune osservazioni sulla sintassi, segnalando un modo più

³¹ Per alcune coordinate specifiche in merito alle *proprietates terminorum*, si rinvia al volume già citato KRETZMANN, KENNY, PINBORG (eds.), *Logica nel Medioevo*. Si veda anche E. JENNIFER ASHWORTH, « Medieval Theories of Singular Terms », *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2019 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2019/entries/singular-terms-medieval/>>.".

³² PETER MACK, *Renaissance Argument: Valla and Agricola in the Traditions of Rhetoric and Dialectic*, Brill, Leiden 1993 (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 43), p. 27.

³³ LORENZO VALLA, *Dialectica* III.1, 7, ed. ZIPPEL, vol. II, p. 280. Cf. AULUS GELLIUS, *Noctes atticae* XV.26, ed. P. K. MARSHALL, Clarendon, Oxford 1990 (Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis), t. II, p. 469: « Aristoteles, quid syllogismus esset, his verbis definivit [...] Eius definitionis non videbatur habere incommode interpretatio facta hoc modo: Syllogismus est oratio, in qua, consensus quibusdam et concessis, aliud quid, quam quae concessa sunt, per ea quae concessa sunt, necessario conficitur ». Cf. ARISTOTELES, *Topica* I.1, 100a25–27.

consono di rendere la traduzione latina rispetto al testo greco – quali per esempio, *positis* al posto di *concessis*, *evenit* invece di *conficitur* – poiché condurrebbero il lettore nella direzioni in cui il sillogismo non si differenzerebbe dal sillogismo entimema, ovvero il sillogismo definito monco, in quanto non sarebbe più costituito di una premessa maggiore, ma soltanto dai suoi due momenti logici conseguenti. Ma facciamo un passo indietro, nel tentativo di visualizzare l'insieme che comprende tali dettagli tecnici.

Quel che colpisce principalmente è la definizione aristotelica del sillogismo ripresa dai *Topici*, e non dagli *Analitici secondi*, in cui Aristotele insiste sull'esclusività del procedimento sillogistico scientifico rispetto a qualsiasi elemento logico estraneo alla semplice struttura formale apodittica. La premessa prima di ogni argomentazione sillogistica, che per il Valla si comporta da *oratio aliquid esse vel non esse significans* (poiché ogni enunciato è irriducibilmente vero nei suoi termini), precede altre due parti del sillogismo. Esso infatti è composto di due premesse e una conclusione per un totale di tre proposizioni, così come sono tre le *res* contenute in *esse*, due in qualità di materia e una terza come risultato sintetico, di cui la prima prova la seconda, e a sua volta la seconda viene dunque provata dalla prima, producendo la verifica inconfutabile e coerente nella conclusione.

L'analisi che viene fatta seguire da Valla riguarda i diciannove modi delle tre figure del sillogismo, evidenziando la spontaneità del sillogismo stesso, la quale risponde a quella tacita norma secondo cui il reticolato primario delle strutture sillogistiche e delle proposizioni di cui esse sono composte è costituita dal significato dei termini di cui le stesse sono costituite, garantendo così il funzionamento coerente della multiformità apodittica. Riconosciuti come validi i quattro modi diretti della prima figura, *Barbara*, *Darii*, *Celarent*, *Ferio* – nomenclatura recuperata dalla scolastica –, Valla si domanda quale sia l'effetto della quantificazione universale del predicato nelle premesse del ragionamento, come il caso del sillogismo *usquequaque singularis*, del quale la tradizione negava la validità, mentre egli stesso ne affermava la plausibilità stando considerando il sillogismo *per totum et partem*, in modo da affermarne l'equivalenza delle relazioni tra genere e specie e tra il tutto e la parte.³⁴

Si tratta di forme sillogistiche descritte dal Valla come *veriora atque utiliora multo* che, nonostante le autorità di Porfirio e Boezio, sono definite *improbandae*, come di conseguenza furono anche quelle formule utilizzate dai maestri della scolastica che sembravano piuttosto procedere all'inverso, dando alla luce mostri indegni di coerenza logica, al posto di ragionamenti inconfutabili:

³⁴ Per quel che concerne la trattazione dei modi del sillogismo, è attestato che Valla si servisse della nomenclatura in uso nelle scuole, per opera di Pietro Hispano. Cf. PETRUS HISPANUS, *Summulae logicae*, IV, 13, ed. Augusto Ponzio, Bompiani, Milano, 2004, (2010), p. 118-122. Circa la trattazione dei sillogismi *per totum et partem*, cf. LAFFRANCHI, *Dialettica e filosofia*, p. 168.

Isti inverse ac prepostere proferunt, similes pueris qui per lusum retrorsus incedunt [...] quod genus pariendi monstrum habetur plerunque penarum [...] tales syllogismi [Dabit] difficile eduntur [...]. At Boetius et ii, quos Boetius laudat sic loquentes, videntur mihi agrippinos partus existimare speciosos [...] tanquam simile primo esset, per accidens volunt et ipsum [Fapesmo] converti: non agrippa sed abortivus et in ipso pariendi nixu extinctus [...] centum amplius modos reperiam ego indirecte colligendi, si veli muti ista licentia reducendi atque convertendi.³⁵

Se provassimo ora a trasporre quanto detto dal Valla in modo speculare al pensiero di Ramus, si toccherebbero tra loro diversi punti di ancoraggio tra cui è possibile intravedere dei ganci da cui emergono cenni di acclimatazione del pensiero dialettico.

Entrambi di matrice, in apparenza, anti-aristotelica, sviluppano il proprio pensiero a partire dall'individuazione degli errori speculativi più tenaci, che avevano condotto i commentatori aristotelici verso la contaminazione di un'*auctoritas* di millenario splendore.

Quando si parla di anti-aristotelismo in Ramo o di critica rivolta al paradigma aristotelico, bisogna far attenzione al modo in cui il concetto stesso di critica viene posto. Tale concetto necessita di una scrupolosa analisi al fine di essere connotato senza equivoci o sovra-interpretazioni fallaci. Nonostante sia spesso presentato come anti-aristotelismo o anti-peripatismo in realtà non è altro che un duplice tentativo: da un lato esso opera la decostruzione delle sovrastrutture interpretative dei commentari scolastici e, dall'altro lato, costituisce un momento edificante i criteri dell'*ars* dialettica. Proprio da questo territorio inaridito nasceva l'esigenza di riformulare lo statuto della *Methodus*, momento cardine della Dialettica, intesa come un modo, un percorso in grado di ricostruire un pensiero che ribaltava la posizione aristotelica.³⁶

Al giovane Ramo, dunque, non spettava altro che condurre una vasta opera restauratrice nel tentativo di far valere, nella Parigi scolastica, *mater Theologorum*, le ragioni della nuova cultura che imponeva i suoi spazi nelle università del tempo. Soprattutto tenendo conto che la Francia del secolo XVI vide il susseguirsi di diverse personalità che hanno attaccato o minato la dominazione di Aristotele e della scolastica – volendo essere più precisi, si tratta di tutti quei pensatori arditi e ingegnosi che riempiono l'intervallo cronologico da Gerson a Cartesio.³⁷

³⁵ LORENZO VALLA, *Dialectica* III.7, 8–12, ed. COPENHAVER–NAUTA, p. 293–294.

³⁶ A partire dalle *Aristotelicae Animadversiones* edite nel 1556, faccio riferimento all'estratto contenente i capitoli IX e X, riediti e modificati nell'anno successivo, nella loro versione più completa: *Quod sit unica doctrinae instituendae methodus: locus e nono Animadversionum P. Rami*, Andrean Vechelum, Parigi 1557 in *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, Paris, Rz 2807; Mazarine, 8° 53758.

³⁷ Cf. VICTOR COUSIN, *Fragments de philosophie cartésienne*, Charpentier Paris, 1845, p. 5–7.

Ciò ci aiuta a riflettere su un dato importante, ovvero su quanto sarebbe un errore storico credere che le scuole parigine ove Ramus compiva in quegli anni il suo apprendistato fossero dominio incontrastato degli ultimi scolastici, degli epigoni di Ockham e di Buridano, di Scoto e di Tommaso. Infatti nonostante difficoltà e contrasti accademici, che talvolta avevano avuto particolare asprezza, nonostante l'umanesimo di autori come Gaguin e di Lefevre, Ramo aveva conquistato le sue posizioni ed esercitava un'influenza crescente sulle giovani generazioni degli scolari parigini i quali accorrevano in gran numero alle sue lezioni. Alla Sorbona e nei collegi, si continuavano a insegnare le stesse cose di ottant'anni prima a causa degli statuti conservatori del cardinale d'Estouteville, tra cui l'insegnamento della logica, la quale era ancora improntata ai manuali del Tartareto e Bricot, mentre il corso si fondava sulle *Summulae logicales* dell'Ispano, spesso commentate con sottile acutezza formalistica dai nominalisti o dai seguaci dello scotismo formati alla scuola di Geronimo Pardo e di John Mair.

Alla luce di tali considerazioni, non può passare inosservato un dato bibliografico importante. Infatti, la fonte che può contribuire a chiudere il cerchio di una trasmissione effettiva dei testi di Valla nella Parigi del secolo successivo – e che coincide peraltro, con l'attività speculativa dell'umanista piccardo – risale al secolo XV, periodo in cui fece la sua comparsa, tra gli scaffali della Sorbona, un'edizione della *Dialectica* del Valla, che ritroviamo sotto il riferimento di Laurentius Valla, *Dialecticarum disputationum libri tres (tria sunt, quibus res omnes comprehenduntur, elementa, et ut nunc loquimur, predicamenta... /... sancitur et consecrator)*.³⁸

VI. Logica e metodo

Nel passaggio dal metodo logico filologico in Lorenzo Valla alla *methodus* – intesa come momento della *Dialectica* – in Ramo, si denota non solo uno spostamento di modulazione dei rispettivi paradigmi quanto anche una matrice comune riadattatasi in modo diverso alle esigenze dell'umanista del Vermandois, che avvertiva le stesse necessità accusate anche dal filologo romano, ma con un atteggiamento e un approccio differente. Tale approccio denota una vera e propria assuefazione del pensiero logico valliano, per quanto sia stato paradigmatico in alcune sfaccettature delle teorie dialettiche del suo tempo. Per certi aspetti, Valla fonda il proprio esercizio critico sull'istituzione di un metodo logico-filologico, dunque se per lui era, accostando la Filologia alla Logica, il modo di estrapolare uno strumento della prassi linguistica su cui si fonda il ragionamento corretto, per Ramo, si tratterà della *methodus*, unica e discendente

³⁸ L'edizione a cui si fa riferimento è indicata dal codice: Paris, BNF, N. Lat. 8690; si veda WILHELM Risse, *Bibliographia Logica. Verzeichnis der Handschriften zur Logik*, Olms, Hildesheim 1979.

che conferisce compiutezza alla dialettica, essendone uno dei momenti logici lungo i quali si dispiegano le regole del ragionamento corretto e coerente. Ciò che colpisce è come nella Parigi del secolo XVI, *mater theologorum*, Ramus fosse ben consapevole dell'urgenza di elaborare una vera e propria decostruzione delle sovrastrutture interpretative, indebitamente sovrapposte alla dottrina aristotelica per mano scolastica, e parallelamente mirasse al riassetto e l'istituzione dell'*ars Dialectica*. In questo modo si allinea all'umanista italiano, costruendo il proprio paradigma di pensiero, che si poneva lontano dagli aristotelici ma non per questo lontano da Aristotele. L'intricato rapporto tra le numerose edizioni e riedizioni delle sue opere – sulle quali intervenne di proprio pugno e di cui ne contiamo attualmente ventuno edizioni, considerando anche il manoscritto originale – ³⁹ denuncia l'esigenza di individuare il reticolo contenutistico generale che emerge dal tessuto filologico, costringendo il lettore a tener conto di sviluppi lessicali paradigmatici, variazioni speculative rilevanti e modifiche strutturali considerevoli. In tale apparato operistico si intravede il *fil rouge* che delinea l'identità di un paradigma di pensiero specifico, a lungo tralasciato in favore di percorsi ramisti sviluppatosi soprattutto in Germania,⁴⁰ che si salda ad altre due edizioni successive, le quali sono rispettivamente la *Dialectique* del 1555, e le *Aristotelicae animadversiones*, pubblicate nel 1556.⁴¹ A partire da questi presupposti e procedendo attraverso la forza di una scrittura espressa in un latino severo e arguto, e dalla puntualità dell'istituzione dell'*ars dialectica*, nasce la stringente analisi operata da Ramus rispetto all'*auctoritas* aristotelica. L'*excursus* speculativo tracciato dall'umanista lega tra loro i punti salienti di un acuto apparato critico, traducibili nello spiccato tentativo di restituire una classicità perduta ma tanto declamata dai criteri di *renovatio* appartenuti al secolo XVI. Il comune denominatore delle numerose edizioni è incarnato dalla definizione che egli dà dell'*ars dialectica*, e l'introduzione delle sue parti:

Dialectique est art de bien disputer. Et en meme sens est nommée Logique, car ces deux noms sont dérivez de logos, c'est-à-dire raison. Et *dialegestae*, comme aussi

³⁹ Non mi soffermerò oltre su quest'aspetto, dalla densità apparentemente impermeabile e dalla profondità affascinante, poiché rispetto al mio intento argomentativo sarà sufficiente tener conto del lavoro magistrale condotto da BRUYÈRE (*Méthode et dialectique*) in merito alla ricostruzione delle fasi redazionali delle opere di Ramus.

⁴⁰ Alcuni studi sul ramismo in Germania sono indicati nel contributo di PETER SHARRATT, « Ramus 2000 », *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, 18/4 (2000), p. 399–455, in particolare p. 444.

⁴¹ PETRUS RAMUS, *Aristotelicae Animadversiones*, Paris 1556. Dalla medesima opera sarà poi successivamente tratto il libro nono, in cui convergono tutte le linee argomentative per l'istituzione della *methodus*: « Quod sit unica doctrinae instituendae methodus: locus e nono Animadversionum P. Rami... » (Paris, BNF, Rz 2807; Mazarine, 8° 53758).

logizestae n'est autre chose que disputer ou raisonner; voire, comme Platon nous enseigne au premier Alcibiade.⁴²

Les parties de la Dialectique sont deux, Invention et Jugement. La première déclare les parties séparées dont toute sentence est composée. La deuxième montre les manières et espèces de les disposer, [...] car par elle nous trouvons les manières de disposer les choses inventées, et généralement (comme dict Platon au Minos) toute doctrine est invention de vérité, mais comme j'estime, ces parties sont nommées Invention et Jugement de leur plus grande force et vertu, pour ce qu'il y a en l'une plus d'invention, en l'autre plus de jugement.⁴³

La *prima pars rami*, ovvero l'*inventio*, è descritta come *sedes argumentorum*, mentre la *secunda pars rami*, ovvero lo *iudicium*, altro non è che la via ordinata lungo la quale disporre le argomentazioni del ragionamento corretto ricavati dai *loci*. Il legame tra questi due momenti, dice Ramus, è espresso in termini di co-implicazione, in quanto non vi è nessuna *inventio* che non rechi in sé *iudicium*, quindi nessun luogo che non rechi in sé una *dispositio*, così come allo stesso tempo non vi sarà nessun giudizio che non possieda l'*inventio*, ovvero non ci sarà *iudicium* che non rechi presso di sé dei luoghi argomentativi.

La *secunda pars rami*, ovvero lo *iudicium*, istituito come via ordinata, conferisce gli strumenti del ragionamento corretto e coerente e pertanto è costituita da tre momenti: enunciazione, sillogismo e metodo. Posto che l'enunciazione è la disposizione per la quale qualcosa si predica di qualcosa d'altro come per le seguenti proposizioni: « Il fuoco brucia; Il fuoco è caldo; Il fuoco non è acqua ».⁴⁴ Il sillogismo invece è disposizione per la quale, la questione su cui si disputa, disposta per argomenti, è necessariamente conclusa. Utilizzando le espressioni ciceroniane per descrivere i tre passaggi logici di un sillogismo, Ramus ci dice che la proposizione (premessa prima) è ciò per la quale la questione è disposta dall'argomentazione, l'assunzione (premessa seconda) è estrapolata a sua volta dalla proposizione antecedente, da cui segue che la conclusione, abbraccia entrambi i momenti precedenti, concludendoli.⁴⁵ Anche se già Marziano Capella, prima, e Severino Boezio, poi, si erano fatti tramite della concezione latina delle arti liberali, consegnandone il complesso organico all'età medievale, le parti dell'*Organon* relative alla *Inventio* avevano goduto di popolarità e influenza,

⁴² Cf. PETRUS RAMUS, *Dialectica*, in Id., *Dialectique*, ed. MICHEL DASSONVILLE, Droz, Genève 1964 (Travaux d'humanisme et Renaissance). Inoltre si segnala l'edizione con testo modernizzato Id., *Dialectique 1555: un Manifeste de la Pléiade*, ed. NELLY BRUYERE, Vrin, Paris 1996 (De Pétrarque à Descartes, 61).

⁴³ PETRUS RAMUS, *Dialectica*, ed. DASSONVILLE, p. 63.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 115.

⁴⁵ Per alcuni riferimenti importanti si rimanda a PETRUS RAMUS, *Rhetoricae distinctiones in Quintilianum* (Id., *Arguments in Rhetoric against Quintilian*, trans. CAROLE NEWLANDS, intr. JAMES J. MURPHY, Northern Illinois University Press, Dekalb, ILL, 1986).

costituendo la *quaestio disputata* che si fondava sull'apporto metodologico della nuova logica, ovvero *Analitici*, *Topici*, ed *Elenchi Sofistici*, divenuti testi di riferimento irrinunciabili per gli studenti delle facoltà delle arti.

È dunque possibile tracciare un arco tematico e cronologico che attraversi tale intervento e che congiunga il pensiero di Lorenzo Valla e quello di Pierre de la Ramée, la cui corda reagisce all'interessante tensione, pronta a scoccare la freccia critica contro l'operato scolastico. In altri termini, nell'interesse di tale contributo non vi è tanto il fine di mostrare delle innovazioni in merito al pensiero ramista o valliano, quanto porre in luce una questione preliminare e poco dibattuta come il contatto possibile tra due paradigmi di pensiero, al fine di giustificare un cambiamento di approccio dello studio della Dialettica tra i maggiori centri del Sapere italiani del secolo XV e la Parigi del secolo XVI. Da questo desumiamo quanto il tentativo di compiere una restituzione di quell'originario significato, andato perduto nelle trame di numerosi interventi in merito a nozioni tecniche di logica e Dialettica, sembri suggerire una maschera interpretativa, il cui calco indica il disvelamento di una impostazione tutt'altro che *destruens*. Si crea così lo spazio per alcuni cenni di acclimatazione della dialettica valliana presso il paradigma di Ramus, dove per acclimatazione si vuole intendere lo spostamento dell'attenzione dalla prassi linguistica perfettamente salda nel metodo logico filologico del Valla verso le corrette procedure del ragionare, completamente svincolate dalla dimensione metafisica e proiettate verso l'istituzione della *Methodus*.

REVIEWS

LISA DEVRIESE (ED.), *PHYSIOGNOMONICA. TRANSLATIO BARTHOLOMAEI DE MESSANA*, BREPOL'S PUBLISHERS, TURNHOUT 2019 (CORPUS PHILOSOPHORUM MEDII AEVI. ARISTOTELES LATINUS, XIX), PP. CX + 74, ISBN 9782503585673.

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L'edizione della versione medievale greco-latina dell'opuscolo pseudo-aristotelico *Physiognomonica* ha visto la luce nello stesso anno in cui l'Union Académique Internationale (UAI) celebrava a Parigi il centenario dalla sua fondazione, testimonianza – in quel 1919 – della volontà da parte della comunità degli uomini presenti nelle istituzioni nazionali della cultura di dare forma e vita a un 'luogo' aperto a tutte le nazioni, dopo la tragedia della I guerra mondiale. Fu infatti in quel contesto di comunione di intenti che fu concepito il progetto di un *Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi* che documentasse la rinascita filosofica e scientifica del mondo latino dopo la fine dell'Impero romano, progetto sentito quasi come esigenza di contribuire a documentare le radici unitarie e le metamorfosi del mondo Occidentale latino. Mi si perdoni l'accostamento della pubblicazione della traduzione di un breve opuscolo, portata a termine in Italia da Bartolomeo da Messina attorno al 1260 su 'mandato' di re Manfredi, figlio dell'imperatore Federico II di Svevia, con il centenario dell'UAI, ma è proprio al progetto concepito negli anni '20 del secolo scorso che questa pubblicazione si collega. Preliminare, infatti, all'avvio del *Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi* fu progettato l'*Aristoteles Latinus*, il censimento dei manoscritti e l'edizione delle opere autentiche oppure oggi ritenute spurie che – come è ben noto agli studiosi – a partire da Severino Boezio fino al secolo XIV furono tradotte dal greco o dall'arabo in latino, e che costituirono l'*humus* che portò alla nascita e alla formazione della tradizione filosofica e scientifica dell'Occidente latino. Fu uno studioso polacco, Konstanty Michalski, che nella sessione annuale del 1928 propose, a nome dell'Accademia Polacca di Scienze e Lettere, che l'UAI patrocinasse, fra le altre già assunte, anche l'iniziativa del *Corpus*, e l'anno successivo fu presa la decisione di dare il via soltanto alla prima fase del progetto che prevedeva l'edizione delle traduzioni di Aristotele. Il compito di redigere un documento sull'insieme delle opere che nel Medioevo latino hanno circolato sotto il nome di Aristotele fu affidato a un altro noto studioso polacco, Alexander

Birkenmajer.¹ Birkenmajer classificò le opere conosciute come di Aristotele nel Medioevo in dodici classi, più una supplementare per alcuni testi particolari. La decisione finale limitò il *corpus* quasi esclusivamente a quelle opere che, attribuite in latino allo Stagirita, anche se non in greco, sono di derivazione diretta o indiretta dal greco, quindi alle opere ordinate da Birkenmajer nelle prime sei classi, ma con qualche eccezione nota agli studiosi.²

Questa premessa non tanto per essere partecipi in qualche modo della ricorrenza del centenario, ma per situare nel contesto della tradizione medievale degli scritti di Aristotele l'edizione della *Physiognomonica* di cui stiamo scrivendo, che è il più recente frutto di quel progetto. In relazione alle scelte allora fatte per il *corpus* dell'*Aristoteles Latinus*, questo opuscolo figura fra le opere elencate nella seconda classe, quelle che non sono autentiche, ma che già in greco circolavano sotto il nome di Aristotele.³ L'edizione è parte della tesi di dottorato discussa da Lisa Devriese alla Katholieke Universiteit di Leuven,⁴ lavoro che si inserisce nei progetti di ricerca portati avanti da qualche tempo da studiosi del *De Wulf-Mansion Centre for Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy* attorno alla tradizione greco-latina di trattati pseudo-aristotelici e dei cosiddetti *Parva Naturalia*, ricerche che hanno dato origine anche a pubblicazioni di rilievo nel corso degli anni.⁵ Particolarmente significativa e di notevole interesse è la raccolta di saggi curata dal compianto Pieter De Leemans, dedicata a Bartolomeo da Messina e al milieu culturale della corte di re Manfredi († 1266), nella quale si illustrano gli interessi filosofici, scientifici, medici coltivati e favoriti alla corte

¹ ALEXANDER BIRKENMAJER, *Classement des ouvrages attribués à Aristote par le Moyen Âge Latin*, Impr. de l'Université de Cracovie, Cracovie 1932 (Prolegomena in Aristotelem Latinum, 1).

² *Aristoteles Latinus. Codices*, ed. GEORGE LACOMBE, with ALEKSANDER BIRKENMAJER, MARTHA DULONG, EZIO FRANCESCHINI, Pars prior, La Libreria dello Stato, Roma 1939 (Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi, Academiarum Consociatarum Auspiciis et Consilio Editum), p. 39–42.

³ *Aristoteles Latinus. Codices*, Pars prior, p. 40: « SECUNDA CLASSIS. Opera sine dubio non aristotelica, quae tamen sub Aristotelis nomine graece exstant, scilicet: (1) *Problemata vulgata*, (2) *Physiognomia vulgata*, (3) *De Mundo*, (4) *De Coloribus*, (5) *De Mirabilibus auditionibus*, (6) *De Lineis indivisibilibus*, pro maiore parte ex graeco in latinum translata a Bartholomeo de Messana ». Nel secondo dopoguerra, nel 1971, Hendrik Joan Drossaart Lulofs, René-Antoine Gauthier O.P., Louis-Jacques Bataillon O.P., Paul Moreaux, Lorenzo Minio-Paluello proposero di costituire separatamente il *corpus* delle versioni medievali di Aristotele dalle lingue semitiche, l'*Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus*: cf. AAFKE M. I. VAN OPPENRAAY, *Introduction*, in AAFKE M. I. VAN OPPENRAAY, RESIANNE FONTAINE (eds.), *The Letter before the Spirit: The Importance of the Text Editions for the Study of the Reception of Aristotle*, Brill, Leiden – Boston 2012, p. 1–9.

⁴ LISA DEVRIESE, « The Body as a Mirror of the Soul. An Inquiry into the Reception of pseudo-Aristotle's *Physiognomonica* in the Middle Ages », Ph.D. Diss. KU Leuven 2018.

⁵ Ricordo i volumi miscellanei: PIETER DE LEEMANS, MICHÈLE GOYENS (eds.), *Aristotle's 'Problemata' in Different Times and Tongues*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2006; MICHÈLE GOYENS, PIETER DE LEEMANS, AN SMETS (eds.), *Science Translated. Latin and Vernacular Translations of Scientific Treatises in Medieval Europe*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2008.

degli Hoenstaufen dal tempo del padre di Manfredi, l'imperatore Federico II.⁶ Nella notevole serie di contributi di noti studiosi si ha modo di avere a un tempo il quadro, il contesto generale e quello specifico di quanto è stato tradotto e mutuato dalle compresenti culture del bacino del Mediterraneo, da sempre – come è noto – oggetto di studi e ricerche da parte di medievisti che si occupano di diversi ambiti del sapere e di lingue diverse. La fama dei due « illustres heroes, Fredericus Cesar et benegenitus eius Manfredus, nobilitatem ac rectitudinem sue forme pandentes, donec fortuna permisit, humana secuti sunt, brutalia dedignant » è assurta ad *exemplum* per Dante.⁷

A Bartolomeo dobbiamo – ma non solo – le traduzioni dal greco degli opuscoli che abbiamo detto classificati come opere pseudo-aristoteliche, fra i quali la *Physiognomonica*, un testo breve di poco più di seicento righe a stampa che ebbe però una diffusione notevole, come testimoniano i 128 manoscritti superstiti risalenti ai secoli XIII–XV (p. XVIII–XXVII). A Lisa Devriese dobbiamo la prima edizione critica di questo opuscolo fondata sull'esame dell'intera vasta tradizione latina. Come scrive Devriese (p. XVII e LXIV), la monumentale edizione di fine Ottocento di Richard Förster resta naturalmente il punto di partenza per chiunque si sia occupato o intenda occuparsi dei testi fisiognomici greci e latini che la tradizione greco-romana e quella araba ci hanno tramandato, e pure delle versioni medievali latine e arabe.⁸ L'edizione del testo greco della *Physiognomonica* con a fronte l'edizione della versione latina di Bartolomeo è alle p. 1–91 del vol. I, ma Förster aveva pubblicato una prima volta la versione latina nella *Dissertatio de translatione latina Physiognomicorum quae feruntur Aristotelis* (1834). Nella *Dissertatio* aveva costituito il testo con quattro codici dopo averne collazionati in parte altri sei; nell'edizione teubneriana aggiunge ai quattro il codice Antoniano XVII 370 (p. LVII: « cuius collatione aegre tum carebam »), e gli erano noti meno della metà dei manoscritti che sono stati censiti fino ad ora. Un altro dato da tenere preliminarmente presente è che fino ad ora non ci sono edizioni critiche delle traduzioni fatte da Bartolomeo ad eccezione del *De mundo* (*Aristoteles Latinus*, XI 1–2, Editio altera); di conseguenza, Devriese non ha avuto la possibilità di confrontarsi con ricerche sistematiche nel suo lavoro sulla versione della *Physiognomonica*, fatta eccezione dell'apporto dei risultati raggiunti negli studi pubblicati nei volumi miscelanei sopra citati.

⁶ PIETER DE LEEMANS (ed.), *Translating at the Court. Bartholomew of Messina and Cultural Life of Manfred, King of Sicily*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2014.

⁷ DANTE ALIGHIERI, *De vulgari eloquentia*, I, XII.

⁸ RICHARDUS FÖRSTER (ed.), *Scriptores Physiognomonic Graeci et Latini*, vol. I: *Physiognomonica Pseudo Aristotelis, Graece et Latine*, Adam antitii cum Epitomis Graece, Polemonis e recensione Georgii Hoffmanni Arabice et Latine continens; vol. II: *Physiognomonica Anonymi, Pseudo Polemonis, Rasis, Secreti Secretorum Latine, Anonymi Graece, Fragmenta, Indices continens*, in *Aedibus E. G. Teubnerii, Lipsiae* 1893 (*Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana*, 1780–1781).

Ma entriamo ora nel merito dell'edizione. L'introduzione (p. ix-c) è suddivisa in tre capitoli, ai quali segue la bibliografia (p. ci-cix). È da rilevare subito la chiarezza con cui Devriese comunica al lettore passo per passo cosa intende fare e a quale scopo, modo di procedere nel quale mi è parso di riconoscere la 'consuetudine didattica' seguita dal suo tutor, l'amico prematuramente scomparso Pieter De Leemans, nelle sue edizioni. Nelle pagine premesse ai capitoli (p. ix-xv), si ha modo di leggere il riassunto chiaro e preciso di quanto segue, con relativi essenziali rinvii bibliografici. Il capitolo 1 («The Latin Tradition», p. xvii-lxii) è il più esteso e il più complesso consacrato all'analisi della tradizione, e inizia con una pagina in cui Devriese traccia il percorso che sta per fare. Il *conspectus codicum* apre, come di consuetudine, l'indagine. Come si è detto, l'elenco è imponente e i dati ivi riportati sono numerosi, compresa l'indicazione del tipo di testo trasmesso da ogni testimone, se sia riconducibile alla tradizione universitaria parigina (*Textus Parisiacus*) o no, come è da tempo consuetudine nelle edizioni dell'*Aristoteles Latinus*. Solo il noto ms. Padova, Pontificia Biblioteca Antoniana, XVII 370 risulta essere testimone superstite della cosiddetta tradizione italiana (*Textus Italicus*). Due minime annotazioni. A proposito di alcuni manoscritti, si specifica che il testo della *Physiognomonica* è 'Cum commento': sarebbe stato il caso di dare in nota informazioni sul commento, dato che Devriese ha pubblicato un inventario dei commenti ascritti e anonimi all'opuscolo in questione.⁹ L'altra annotazione potrebbe essere ritenuta un po' pedante: nell'elenco compare con frequenza, sempre a proposito del testo, 'sec. man. correctus'; ora, dato che le annotazioni nei margini e gli interventi su testo di un manoscritto sono frequenti e quasi sempre non di una sola mano,¹⁰ sarebbe stato preferibile segnalare 'al. man. correctus' (e non entriamo nel merito di cosa significhi 'correctus', perché potrebbe anche trattarsi dell'intervento di un lettore che potrebbe non avere a che fare con il testo ritenuto 'autentico').

La seconda parte del capitolo 1 («The Parisian tradition», p. xxvii-xliv) ci porta nel bel mezzo dell'analisi critica dei dati raccolti durante la collazione del testo della *Physiognomonica* in tutti i testimoni (almeno per sondaggi, cf. p. xci), 128 manoscritti che si distribuiscono in numero diverso diacronicamente dalla fine del secolo XIII fino agli inizi del XVI (un solo ms.). Non è possibile ripercorrere ogni fase della ricerca condotta con acribia dall'editrice, anche perché il percorso è intricato e richiederebbe talvolta un'analisi e un eventuale commento punto per punto. Intenderei di conseguenza riassumerne i passaggi e presentarne e discuterne alcune valutazioni. Dato di partenza sono le due liste di

⁹ LISA DEVRIESE, «An Inventory of Medieval Commentaries on Pseudo-Aristotle's *Physiognomonica*», *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale*, 59 (2017), p. 215-246.

¹⁰ EAD., «Physiognomy in Context: Marginal Annotations in the Manuscripts of the *Physiognomonica*», *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévale*, 84 (2017), p. 107-141.

tassazione parigine a noi giunte, quella del c. 1275 e quella del 1304, le sole superstiti di una attività di diffusione dei testi teologici, filosofici e scientifici che sicuramente è stata di notevole mole.¹¹ Non è certo il caso di soffermarsi sui meccanismi a tutti noti dell'attività degli stazionari, del meccanismo di affitto e copiatura delle pecie (fascicoli slegati) che costituivano, anche variando nel tempo, singole opere o gruppi di opuscoli, del processo di formazione, di approvazione e di 'ufficializzazione' degli *exemplaria* da parte dei maestri, ma di tutto questo deve tener conto l'editore di testi / manuali in uso nei *curricula* delle università medievali, nel nostro caso, delle opere di Aristotele. Nella lista cronologicamente anteriore, seppur risalente a più di mezzo secolo dalla costituzione giuridica dell'Università di Parigi, la *Physiognomonica* compare esplicitamente assieme alla versione latina del commento di Alessandro di Afrodisia ai *Meteorologica* portata a termine da Guglielmo di Moerbeke nel 1260, un'opera di non poca mole, in un *exemplar* costituito da 18 pecie.¹² In quella del 1304 l'opuscolo pseudo-aristotelico non compare, ma, secondo la tradizione storiografica, si ritiene fosse compresa nell'*exemplar* elencato come « Item De motibus animalium et aliorum parvorum. xxvii. pec' », preceduto dall'*exemplar*: « Item in Sensu et Sensato et De anima, De memoria et reminiscentia, De sompno et vigilia .xii. pec' ». ¹³ Attorno al contenuto possibile o probabile dell'*exemplar* « Item De motibus animalium et aliorum parvorum » le interpretazioni degli studiosi continuano ogni volta che si deve approntare l'edizione di uno degli opuscoli che costituiscono l'insieme che va sotto la denominazione *Parva naturalia*, denominazione in uso dalla seconda metà del secolo XIII, oppure l'edizione di uno dei numerosi opuscoli che troviamo in non pochi codici che tramandano il cosiddetto *corpus recentius* delle opere di filosofia naturale di Aristotele, come l'opuscolo di cui ci stiamo occupando. A proposito di questo problema, Devriese assume le conclusioni proposte da De Leemans nell'edizione della traduzione del *De motu animalium* dopo l'approfondito esame da lui fatto dei dati finora accertati dagli studiosi, e cioè che nell'*exemplar* del 1304 era contenuta anche la *Physiognomonica*.¹⁴ Riguardo ai due *exemplaria* – quello del c. 1275, nel quale non figurano i *Parva naturalia*, ma la *Physiognomonica* sì, e quello del 1304, in

¹¹ Per le liste cf. GIOVANNA MURANO, *Opere diffuse per 'exemplar' e pecia*, Brepols, Turnhout 2005, p. 83–89, 120–126.

¹² MURANO, *Opere diffuse*, p. 84, nr. 17. Per la storia della tradizione e l'edizione del testo del commento di Alessandro si veda ALEXANDRE D'APHRODISIAS, *Commentaire sur les Météores d'Aristote*, *Traduction de Guillaume de Moerbeke*, ed. ALFONS JOSEPH SMET, Leuvense Universitaire Uitgaven – Éditions Béatrice-Nauwelaerts, Leuven – Paris 1968 (*Corpus Latinum Commentariorum in Aristotelem Graecorum*, IV).

¹³ MURANO, *Opere diffuse*, p. 121, nr. 11 e 12.

¹⁴ PIETER DE LEEMANS (ed.), *De progressu animalium. De motu animalium. Translatio Guillelmi de Morbeka*, Turnhout, Brepols 2011 (*Corpus philosophorum Medii Aevi. Aristoteles latinus*, XVII, 2.II–III), p. LXIII–LXXIX.

cui si registra l'opposto – non dovremmo dimenticare che si tratta di due documenti-esempi che non rispecchiano minimamente la complessità della produzione e del commercio librario a Parigi, tanto che in quello del 1275 per la parte filosofica figurano i commenti di Alessandro (ai *Meteorologica*), di Simplicio (alle *Categorie*), di Temistio (al *De anima*), e la *Physiognomonica* e nient'altro. La reale situazione del *corpus* aristotelico relativo alla filosofia naturale è rispecchiata in quella che è ritenuta la composizione del *corpus vetustius* e del *corpus recentius* testimoniata da manoscritti databili a noi giunti.¹⁵ Se – come sembra – nel corso dei primi decenni dell'Università di Parigi in particolare si è passati da un *corpus* aristotelico in qualche misura meno ricco a uno maggiormente esteso e articolato, è più che probabile ritenere che gli *exemplaria* esistenti abbiano dato luogo a un testo in un certo modo 'fuso' e con contaminazioni progressivamente 'incrociate'.

Assunto che verosimilmente la *Physiognomonica* doveva essere compresa anche nell'*exemplar* del 1304, Devriese si trova a dover valutare i risultati della collazione tenendo presente la testimonianza delle due liste di tassazione, quindi dell'esistenza molto probabile di almeno due *exemplaria*. Confrontando i dati ottenuti per la *Physiognomonica* con quelli raccolti dall'analisi della tradizione fatta dall'editore della traduzione del commento di Alessandro ai *Meteorologica*, è in grado di confermarli, e quindi propone di ricondurre quattro testimoni con entrambi i testi (*Meteorologica* e *Physiognomonica*) all'*exemplar* attestato dalla lista del c. 1275, ai quali ritiene di poter aggiungere altri cinque, che però non tramandano anche il commento di Alessandro (p. xxxi-xxxiii). L'editrice conclude: « I will refer to the nine copies of the *exemplar* of the taxation list of 1275 as **P¹** », cioè come lo stadio più antico della diffusione dell'opuscolo all'Università di Parigi (p. xxxiii). Se ho ben compreso la frase, mi sembra improprio affermare che questi manoscritti siano 'copie' dell'*exemplar*, e riterrei piuttosto di dire che il testo da essi tramandato deriva dal testo trådito dall'*exemplar* del 1275. Devriese, subito dopo, afferma che assieme ad Ap (il codice padovano indipendente dalla tradizione universitaria parigina) questi manoscritti – come risulterà in seguito – offrono un testo che è « closest to the original translation of Bartholomew » (p. xxxiii). Il problema, tuttavia, è che non è stato possibile individuare varianti / errori che fondino la comune origine di questi codici, e che essi quindi si costituirebbero come gruppo perché in essi sarebbero assenti gli errori che caratterizzano il resto della tradizione, e anche altre lezioni caratteristiche del ms. Ap (elencate più avanti alle p. xlv-xlvi). Procedendo, Devriese analizza e valuta ulteriori dati ottenuti dalle collazioni ritenendo di poter mettere a frutto l'approfondito esame della tradizione fatto da

¹⁵ *Aristoteles Latinus. Codices*, Pars prior, p. 50–51: es. della composizione del *Corpus vetustius*, cod. Urb. lat. 206 (intra annos 1240–1254), del *Corpus recentius*, cod. Vat. lat. 2083 (a. 1284).

De Leemans nell'edizione del *De motu* e nel *De progressu animalium*, postulando a sua volta l'esistenza di un secondo *exemplar* (**P²**) così come attestato dalla lista del 1304 [« Taxation list of 1304 as proof for the second *exemplar* (**P²**) », p. xxxv–xl], gruppo di testimoni al quale apparterebbero ben 90 manoscritti.¹⁶ La situazione attestata dai testimoni riconducibili a **P²** documenterebbe una tale contaminazione al suo interno da far ipotizzare l'esistenza contemporanea a Parigi di tre gruppi di pecie con il testo della *Physiognomonica*, così che da **P²** avrebbero avuto origine **P^{2a}**, **P^{2b}** e **P^{2c}** (ma solo per la pecia 2 triplicata). Mentre per **P^{2a}** non sarebbero stati individuati errori che potremmo ritenere significativi, per **P^{2b}** e **P^{2c}** Devriese elenca rispettivamente 17 (ma alcune di queste varianti ricorrerebbero più volte) e 11 varianti / errori, ma che tuttavia per **P^{2b}** non sono di volta in volta condivisi da tutti i manoscritti ritenuti appartenenti a questo sottogruppo. Devriese dice che per valutare se un manoscritto possa essere riconducibile a tale gruppo ha seguito questa regola: deve avere più della metà delle varianti attentamente selezionate come caratteristiche del gruppo (p. xxxviii). Stessa regola è applicata per ipotizzare l'esistenza di un terzo *exemplar* (« The third *exemplar* **P³** », p. xl–xlii), ma questo ulteriore intero gruppo di codici condividerebbe con *Ap* 6 lezioni (che però non sembrano a chi legge determinanti). Infine, a parere di Devriese, 6 codici di per sé riconducibili a **P³** (e come tali segnalati nel *conspectus*), sembrerebbero far ipotizzare l'esistenza di un quarto esemplare [« A fourth *exemplar* (**P⁴**)? », p. xliii–xliv], ma non ci sono elementi per suffragare tale ipotesi.

Credo sia il caso di fare alcune considerazioni su quanto abbiamo visto. Riguardo a **P¹**, dal punto di vista strettamente ecdotico, sembra veramente problematico ritenere fondata la costituzione di un gruppo di testimoni senza che sia stato possibile individuare un solo errore significativo comune a tutti i membri, e tantomeno ipotizzare la loro costituzione come gruppo in quanto discendenti da un *exemplar* universitario. Il fatto che questi 9 codici conservino o condividano alcune 'buone' lezioni con *Ap* avrebbe a mio parere potuto indurre ad approfondire l'indagine nella direzione di poter individuare l'attestazione di uno o più errori in comune con *Ap*: il fatto che costituiscano con quest'ultimo – come rilevato da Devriese – il gruppo di testimoni con un testo 'migliore' di quello tramandato dal resto della tradizione, potrebbe far ipotizzare che risalgano in qualche misura alla tradizione indipendente da quella universitaria, e che sia necessario di conseguenza ipotizzare un intermediario fra *x* e **P¹** (si veda lo stemma a p. lxii). Inoltre, mi sembra che lo stemma così come è proposto non renda la dimensione diacronica della tradizione, perché *Ap* non è contemporaneo dell'ipotetico **P¹**, che si ritiene già presente a Parigi attorno al 1275. Quanto alla regola adottata dall'editrice, si potrebbe anche ritenerla valida qualora fosse

¹⁶ DE LEEEMANS (ed.), *De progressu animalium*, p. lxi–lxviii.

garantita da un numero minimo di lezioni comuni a tutti i membri del gruppo: ma se così fosse, non si tratterebbe più di una regola, bensì di un dato di fatto ben contemplato in ecdotica, e cioè che quelle lezioni garantirebbero l'ipotesi di una comune ascendenza. Quanto poi alla contemporanea esistenza di più *exemplaria*, situazione ulteriormente complicata da più pecie rifatte in uno o nell'altro esemplare, dai quali dipenderebbe tutta la tradizione superstite, ad eccezione di un testimone (nel nostro caso Ap), è un'ipotesi possibile. Tuttavia, di fronte a simili situazioni della tradizione di un testo non si può fare a meno di chiedersi: che dire del fatto che oltre un centinaio di codici distribuiti su almeno un paio di secoli e scritti / trascritti a diverse latitudini e longitudini non solo da scribi professionisti ma anche da persone interessate o all'interno di sedi istituzionali? Sarebbero tutti codici riconducibili ad un'unica sede universitaria, seppur l'*Alma Mater Parisiensis*? Si può valutare questa un'ipotesi 'economica'? Mi sembra che si ritenga che l'arrivo della stampa abbia portato alla scomparsa (o al riuso) di un'alta percentuale dei manoscritti prima esistenti e circolanti: è ragionevole ritenere che opere tramandate in più di cento copie superstiti (altri trattati di Aristotele in più di duecento, per non parlare dei testi dell'*Organon*) siano da ricondurre tutte al medesimo luogo istituzionale? Ma accettiamo pure che tutto questo corrisponda a quanto effettivamente avvenuto, in questo caso siamo di fronte a quella che viene definita una 'degenerazione poligenetica', una contaminazione incrociata e intricata a tal punto che non è possibile applicare seppur in modo 'attenuato' i principi su cui si fonda la critica testuale dei testi medievali, che si tratti di testi letterari, filosofici, teologici o di altro genere: per nessun testo classico è superstite una tradizione minimamente paragonabile a quelle dei testi aristotelici o in uso negli *Studia*. Ed è risaputo che la *Physiognomonica* interessò a un pubblico di lettori non circoscritto ai maestri delle arti, pubblico che ha favorito una tradizione non circoscritta e delimitata. A proposito di questa e di altre questioni, è sempre valida, non solo come punto di partenza, la raccolta postuma dei contributi di Iole Agrimi, che si stava occupando della diffusione dei testi fisiognomici medievali da qualche tempo e che ci ha purtroppo lasciato parecchio anzitempo.¹⁷

Procedendo nella sua indagine, Lisa Devriese affronta i problemi che pone l'unico testimone sino a noi giunto della tradizione definita 'italiana', il codice XVII 370 della Pontificia Biblioteca Antoniana di Padova che abbiamo già incontrato (sigla Ap) (« The Italian independent tradition », p. XLIV-LII). A mio parere, l'aggettivo 'independent' potrebbe essere ritenuto in qualche misura improprio, perché ha senso solo se lo si intende in relazione alla tradizione universitaria (P), e non in senso assoluto, dal momento che Ap dipende

¹⁷ IOLE AGRIMI, *Ingeniosa scientia nature. Studi sulla fisiognomica medievale*, SISMEL Edizioni del Galluzzo, Firenze 2002.

dall'archetipo o, meglio, da un sub-archetipo, come pure **P. Ap** è un manoscritto noto a coloro che si occupano dell'Aristotele latino sia perché tramanda gran parte delle traduzioni di Bartolomeo sia perché è il *codex unicus* della versione greco-latina del *De partibus animalium* nota come *Anonyma*, e inoltre perché è stato messo in relazione con Pietro d'Abano.¹⁸ Ciro Giacomelli ha da poco pubblicato i risultati di un approfondito e minuzioso esame codicologico (noto a Devriese) che mi pare getti nuova, decisiva luce sul codice, sulle diverse mani che hanno lasciato numerose tracce sui suoi fogli; in esso rileva elementi decisivi per stabilire che è un codice composito, della cui prima parte è riconoscibile l'ultimo foglio dalle impronte lasciate dalla precedente legatura (fol. 87v), foglio non scritto che chiude proprio la serie delle traduzioni di Bartolomeo.

Il testo tramandato da *Ap* si contrappone a quello di tutti gli altri testimoni soprattutto per un nutrito elenco – anche se non completo, come avvisa l'editrice – di lezioni « regardless of whether *Ap* or **P** offer the correct Latin rendering of the Greek », elenco che si legge alle p. XLV–XLVI. A parere di Devriese, il dato di fatto che il testo tramandato da *Ap* sia qualitativamente migliore di quello risalente alla tradizione universitaria, che coinvolge tutti i restanti testimoni, sarebbe paradossale, e « could lead to the hypothesis that the *Physiognomonica* was barely read outside the Parisian University milieu. Admittedly, the majority of the medieval commentaries on the *Physiognomonica* have a link to Paris » (p. XLVII). Il fatto, poi, che fra i manoscritti che tramandano il testo ce ne sia una decina individuati di 'mano italiana' porterebbe a ipotizzare che « Italian scholars used a manuscript of the Parisian branch in order to copy the *Physiognomonica* ». Al di là delle considerazioni circa la tradizione individuata come unicamente universitaria fatte sopra da chi scrive, è evidente che non è giustificabile concludere che la *Physiognomonica* fosse scarsamente letta al di fuori del *milieu* universitario parigino perché uno solo è il testimone del ramo della tradizione individuato come italiano. Devriese ha fatto un lavoro encomiabile andando a scorrere i volumi delle descrizioni dei codici dell'*Aristoteles Latinus*, ma avrebbe dovuto tener conto anche degli scribi e dei possessori dei codici, nonché della loro possibile datazione, e pure del fatto che le descrizioni dei manoscritti conservati nelle biblioteche delle varie nazioni sono opera di studiosi diversi e frequentemente non si danno notizie sulle 'mani'.¹⁹ Anche a proposito dei commenti Devriese ha fatto un'indagine onerosa e scrupolosa passando in

¹⁸ Mi limito a segnalare il più recente lavoro sul codice, dove il lettore interessato può trovare tutti i riferimenti bibliografici a studi precedenti, in particolare a quello di Ezio Franceschini e a quello di Guido Billanovich e Luigi Olivieri: CIRO GIACOMELLI, « Le *Patavinus Antonianus* XVII 370: éléments pour une étude paléographique et textuelle », *Pecia*, 20 (2018), p. 45–79.

¹⁹ Si veda la nota 3 a p. 7 del *Prooemium: Aristoteles Latinus. Codices*, Pars prior. I codici nelle biblioteche italiane furono tutti censiti da Ezio Franceschini nei primi anni '30 del secolo scorso.

rassegna i cataloghi di manoscritti accessibili nel *Tabularium* della KU Leuven,²⁰ ma è pur vero che Charles H. Lohr non pubblicò mai – a mia conoscenza – la voce *Anonymus* nel suo censimento dei commenti, probabilmente perché era sempre *in progress*.²¹ Inoltre, l'influsso della 'lettura' di un'opera come la *Physiognomonica* credo vada ben oltre il genere dei commenti, come del resto documentano i non molti studi del settore.

Ma torniamo ad *Ap* e al rilevante problema delle 'doppie lezioni', presenti sia in *Ap* sia in *P* oppure ora in *Ap* ora in *P* (« Double readings », p. XLVIII–LXI). L'indagine di Devriese riguardo a questo fenomeno ricorrente nelle edizioni dell'*Aristoteles Latinus* è articolata, complessa e condotta con acribia. Quella delle 'doppie lezioni' è una *vexata questio*, e l'analisi della loro molteplice tipologia incrocia anche il problema delle varianti introdotte a seguito di una 'revisione' della traduzione, da attribuire al traduttore stesso o a interventi di altri, e la loro ricorrenza può anche essere una caratteristica del modo di tradurre adottato, col quale il traduttore chiarisce, spiega un termine greco traslitterato o il cui significato è complesso, perché è un termine composto e senza equivalente nella lingua latina. Devriese classifica le 'doppie lezioni' secondo due tipologie; la prima che comprende i casi in cui un termine latino è seguito da uno o più termini che non si trovano in greco, solitamente preceduti da 'id est' oppure 'vel', ed è chiaro che queste aggiunte introducono a loro volta due specie di doppia lezione: 'id est' prelude a un sinonimo o più frequentemente a un termine che chiarisce il senso, mentre 'vel' precede un sinonimo (elenco completo alle p. XLIX–LI). La seconda tipologia è costituita da casi in cui la traduzione dello stesso termine greco è differente nei due rami fondamentali della tradizione (esempi a p. LII). Devriese poi correttamente estende la sua indagine su questo fenomeno a quanto risulta sino ad ora dagli studi sulle traduzioni (in alcuni casi edite solo in parzialmente) di altri trattati aristotelici o pseudo-aristotelici attribuite a Bartolomeo per poter formulare una accurata valutazione delle doppie lezioni presenti nei codici della *Physiognomonica*. A proposito del confronto con l'edizione del *De mundo* già presente nella serie *Aristoteles Latinus* nelle versioni di Bartolomeo e di Nicola Siculo Greco, è da rilevare che la casistica delle doppie lezioni rilevate in *Ap* e negli altri cinque codici dagli editori è più articolata di quanto non sembri.²² Indagare accuratamente le altre traduzioni di Bartolomeo, come Devriese ha fatto, per meglio conoscere e quindi riconoscere la tipologia delle doppie lezioni è senza dubbio la fase indispensabile di una ricerca

²⁰ DEVRIESE, « An Inventory of Medieval Commentaries », p. 218.

²¹ *Relata refero*: Claudio Leonardi ebbe a dire una volta che p. Lohr esitava sempre di fronte alla proposta di mandare alle stampe tale voce.

²² *De mundo. Translationes Bartholomaei et Nicholai*, ed. WILLIAM L. LORIMER, rev. LORENZO MINIO-PALUELLO, Desclée De Brouwer, Bruges – Paris 1965 (Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi. *Aristoteles Latinus*, XI 1-2, [ed. alt.]), p. XIV–XV.

correttamente condotta. Tuttavia, siccome nel mondo latino circolavano già a quell'altezza cronologica (inizio della seconda metà del secolo XIII) anche altre versioni latine di scritti fisiognomici pubblicati da Förster, a mio parere sarebbe il caso di estendere la ricerca al lessico delle traduzioni di questi altri testi fisiognomici. Non è un'ipotesi improbabile, infatti, prospettare che il lessico ormai 'vulgato' possa aver contribuito all'introduzione di sinonimi o di altra terminologia. In linea assolutamente teorica, perché non ho alcun elemento che possa suffragarla, si potrebbe pensare che questa mia annotazione / proposta proietti ombra sulla valutazione che Devriese fa al termine dello studio del fenomeno delle doppie lezioni con alcune considerazioni sul 'metodo di traduzione' di Bartolomeo (p. LX-LXI), ma non è questo il mio intendimento. Devriese rileva che, come nella tradizione della *Physiognomonica*, anche in quella delle altre traduzioni di Bartolomeo l'analisi da lei fatta delle doppie lezioni trova in contrapposizione *Ap* e il resto dei manoscritti, anche se in misura e portata diversa nelle diverse opere. Questi dati porterebbero a ritenere probabile che Bartolomeo abbia scritto nei margini del suo testo « some extra translations or variant readings of one specific word. Copyists of his translation then made different choices. The copyist at the origin of the independent branch of *Ap* copied only the main text [...] while the copyist at the origin of the Parisian branch included the variant readings in the main text, in the margin or interlinear » (p. LX-LXI). In linea teorica, questa interpretazione è possibile, ma così come è proposta non sembra molto probabile perché troppo schematica e riduttiva, a meno che non si ritenga che le traduzioni di Bartolomeo non facessero parte delle opere tradotte delle quali si parla nella nota lettera di accompagnamento inviata da re Manfredi alla Facoltà delle Arti parigina, e una 'copia d'autore' avrebbe in questo caso dato origine all'intera tradizione universitaria. Ma, pure se così fosse, resterebbe da spiegare e giustificare la presenza 'incostante' delle cosiddette doppie lezioni. Riguardo allo stemma, si può essere tutti d'accordo che sia estremamente difficile rappresentare una tradizione tanto estesa come quella esaminata. A mio parere, quindi, l'albero proposto è da considerarsi come una riduzione a uno schema essenziale, che non riflette la complessità della tradizione. Ritengo, tuttavia, che sia comunque indispensabile indicare almeno altri due sub-archetipi dei due rami.

Nel capitolo 2 Devriese affronta il problema della relazione della traduzione con la tradizione greca superstite e offre anche un chiaro e articolato quadro delle caratteristiche del modo di tradurre 'verbum de verbo' (« Bartholomew of Messina's Translation and the Greek Tradition », p. LXIII-XC). Anche in questo capitolo siamo di fronte ai risultati di un notevole lavoro sulle edizioni moderne (che sono 9, a partire da quella di Bekker in poi) del testo greco. Per le edizioni dal secolo XV fino a Bekker rinvia alla disamina fatta da Förster, che effettivamente fornisce notizie delle singole edizioni, se non proprio esaustive,

sufficienti. Dopo aver parlato dei pregi e pure dei limiti del pionieristico ingente lavoro di studio della tradizione e di edizione del testo greco e della versione di Bartolomeo di Förster, valutato alla luce di studi più recenti (Harlfinger – Reinisch) e pure tenuto conto delle proposte avanzate da Giacomelli nel contributo già citato, anche se da lei non ritenute valide per la *Physiognomonica*, Devriese deve a sua volta concludere che nessuno dei manoscritti greci superstiti rappresenta il ramo della tradizione cui doveva appartenere il codice usato da Bartolomeo, risultato cui era giunto anche Förster. Questi testimoni documentano una tradizione tripartita, e Devriese alle p. LXVIII–LXXVI considera e valuta in modo sistematico tutti i luoghi in cui il testo di Bartolomeo segue ora l'uno, ora l'altro ramo, ora due contro uno dei tre, offrendo al lettore tutti i casi di queste combinazioni, e ritiene di poter concludere che l'esemplare di Bartolomeo doveva essere un testimone che fondeva il ramo 'b' con il comune antenato dei rami 'c' e 'd'. Dal momento, però, che questi codici sono tutti posteriori a quando Bartolomeo ha portato a termine la traduzione, questa rappresenterebbe uno stadio anteriore alla tradizione attestata dai codici superstiti. Mi sembra, però che si dovrebbe andare molto cauti riguardo a questo, perché l'esemplare usato dal traduttore poteva essere 'contemporaneo' dei codici superstiti quanto alla tradizione attestata, e magari la loro 'origine', poi andato perduto: il secolo XV è un periodo abbastanza complicato per quanto riguarda la circolazione e la copiatura dei codici greci.

La sezione IV del capitolo 2 illustra una nutrita serie di dati a documentazione del modo di tradurre 'verbum de verbo' (« IV. *Verbum de verbo* translation method », p. LXXVIII–XC). Queste pagine offrono al lettore interessato allo studio delle traduzioni greco-latine un'indagine condotta in modo encomiabile.

L'ultimo capitolo, il terzo, è dedicato alla spiegazione dei criteri seguiti nell'organizzazione dell'edizione (« Editorial principles », p. XCI–C), che l'autrice elenca e precisa minuziosamente. In generale, le scelte fatte e le decisioni prese al riguardo sono condivisibili, e del resto le edizioni pubblicate nella serie dell'*Aristoteles Latinus* si sono sempre conformate agli standards più alti. Quanto ai criteri adottati per la costituzione del testo, la dichiarazione che si legge in apertura del paragrafo ad essa dedicato: « It is important to keep in mind that I opted to reconstruct the Latin *Physiognomonica* as it was originally translated by Bartholomew of Messina, and not the version which knew the widest dissemination » (p. XCIII), per un verso è pleonastica, perché quello è il fine di qualunque editore di testi, per l'altro porta a chiedersi se, di conseguenza, la mole delle varianti della tradizione universitaria sia destinata *ipso facto* all'apparato latino, dato che il testo di *Ap* è ritenuto qualitativamente migliore, quindi più 'vicino' alla fonte. Abbiamo visto, però, che la questione della presenza delle doppie lezioni non solo in *Ap* ha portato Devriese ad attribuire un valore particolare a *P*¹, quasi fosse in un certo senso 'complementare' rispetto ad *Ap* per

la costituzione del testo, date anche le ‘distrazioni’ dello scriba di Ap. Meno giustificabile, invece, a mio parere la presenza in apparato delle varianti di P² e P³, dal momento che è stato stabilito che rappresentano la degenerazione progressiva della tradizione universitaria.

Giunti al termine di questo interessante e ben documentato viaggio lungo i secoli, vorrei concludere collegandomi a quanto sta scritto a p. LXI e in particolare a p. LXXIX, e in un certo senso andando oltre. In quelle pagine Devriese sembra voler spezzare una lancia a favore di Bartolomeo, con l'intenzione di riscattarne la non buona nomea come traduttore, e non tanto per il giudizio di Ruggero Bacone sul ‘translator Manfredi’, quanto – mi sembra di poter leggere fra le righe – per la valutazione di Minio-Paluello, da lui formulata al termine del confronto della versione di Bartolomeo del *De mundo* con quella di Nicola Siculo Greco.²³ Proporrei, in generale, di vedere le cose da un altro punto di vista. Il problema della ‘leggibilità’ e fruibilità delle traduzioni greco-latine medievali fondate sul metodo del ‘verbum de verbo’ o ‘verbum e verbo’ è una questione annosa, ma che in se stessa mi pare anacronistica. Come è risaputo, la discussione sul modo migliore di tradurre è da sempre stata presente, e ancora Gerolamo ne tratta per giustificare il suo ‘approccio’ alla questione (‘sensus de sensu’), chiamando Cicerone a sua difesa. Molto più nota è l’interminabile *querelle* fra gli umanisti a partire dagli inizi del Quattrocento. Riguardo al modo prevalente di tradurre dal greco fatto proprio con sfumature personali a partire dalla rinascita del secolo XII, dovremmo forse richiamare frequentemente alla memoria quanto Giustiniano prescrive nella *Constitutio Tanta* premessa al *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, il forte richiamo che ha probabilmente condizionato l’approccio e la ‘mentalità’ non solo di un traduttore quando si accingeva a far conoscere ai Latini un testo che arrivava dal mondo antico. In quel documento giuridico l’imperatore vietava qualsiasi interpretazione del testo latino, ingiungendo di tradurre in greco – se proprio si voleva – solo κατὰ πόδα: deve prevalere la *littera*, non la *sententia* quando si ha di fronte un testo ‘autorevole’.²⁴ E sappiamo come i giuristi abbiano influito sul modo di argomentare e di disputare nell’universo istituzionale e ‘scolastico’ medievale.

²³ ROGERI BACON *Opera quaedam hactenus inedita*, ed. JOHN S. BREWER, vol. I, Longman, London 1859 (Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores or Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages, 15/1), p. 91; *De mundo. Translationes Bartholomaei et Nicholai*, ed. LORIMER, p. XXXI.

²⁴ *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, Tanta 21: « [...] in praesenti sancire, ut nemo neque eorum, qui in praesenti iuris peritiam habent, nec qui postea fuerint audeat commentarios isdem legibus adnectere: nisi tantum si velit eas in Graecam vocem transformare sub eodem ordine eaque consequentia, sub qua et voces Romanae positae sunt (hoc quod Graeci κατὰ πόδα dicunt), et si forsitan per titulorum suptilitatem adnotare maluerint et ea quae παράτιτλα nuncupantur componere ». Cf. WALTER BERSCHIN, *Griechisch-lateinisches Mittelalter: von Hieronymus zu Nikolaus von Kues*, Francke, Bern 1980, p. 87 ff.

DENIS J. J. ROBICHAUD, *PLATO'S PERSONA: MARSILIO FICINO, RENAISSANCE HUMANISM, AND PLATONIC TRADITIONS*, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA PRESS, PHILADELPHIA 2018, 344 PP., ISBN 9780812249859.*

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This monograph breaks new ground in the field of Ficino studies and is to be welcomed for its fresh focus and clear view. The author has a confident grasp of and respect for the contributions of other scholars present and past, but he has also thought deeply about Ficino as a writer and has come up with fresh insights based on a careful reading of many texts and his own painstaking research, including studies of Ficino's marginalia in the manuscripts he worked with. Besides reviewing past literature, either in the text or in his substantial notes, he has presented a revised reconstruction of the order in which Ficino worked on various texts, examining the role played in the formation of his ideas by Iamblichus, Alcinous and Albinus (patiently distinguishing between the two), by Plotinus, Brotinus, Amelius and a host of others. He has tracked down the presence of those more shadowy figures Eudorus, Philolaus and Aglaophemus, and has given due weight to the crucial influences of Proclus, Porphyry and Dionysius the pseudo-Areopagite. All this has led him to develop a new understanding of Ficino's working strategies across the length of his career. It has also resulted in the observation that Ficino is acutely aware of the dramatic potential of dialogue. As presented in this account, Ficino appreciates the dialogic form of Plato's writings and uses that knowledge, together with his extensive reading in the commentary traditions of antiquity, to penetrate its deepest meanings; he then himself engages in similar strategies to allow different voices to contribute to a progressive elucidation of philosophic views.

* This review was presented at the Philosophical Review Club (University of Leuven) on 6 December 2018.

Central to Robichaud's re-examination of Ficino's work is the symbol of the mask: *prosopon* in Greek, or in Latin, *persona*. He begins, therefore, with a detailed discussion of ancient oratory, including masks, faces and persons, concealment and disclosure. He raises early some fundamental Socratic questions, on the difference between the outward face and the inner person, on whether thinking can be best understood as the soul conversing with itself, and whether there is a prior pre-discursive person – a 'what one really is', as opposed to 'what one thinks one is'. This is in addition to the outwardly dialogic role of the mask in advancing discussion and refutation.

In relation to the idea that the ancients veiled the most profound of their teachings, Ficino is shown to have grasped the important key that only an intelligent use of comparable techniques will allow those innermost truths to be unveiled. The mask, or its virtual equivalent in writing, is thus a device not only for displaying character but for bringing into the reader's presence things that are otherwise not readily seen. Although the original Greek masks have a strongly visual aspect, adoption into the Latin tradition, with the Latin name, *persona*, enhanced the sense of adopting a voice, through the Latin word derivation, *per-sonare*, 'to sound through'. Through *personae* different interlocutors with different voices interact to advance views in different styles. Aside from the traditional grotesque masks of the ancient stage, Robichaud distinguishes three *personae* or *prosopa* in Plato's writings: Plato's own *persona* (with a subsidiary discussion of whether Plato is to be identified with the Athenian stranger), the *persona* of Socrates, and that of Pythagoras. Moving to Ficino's writing he adds two more masks: the *persona* of Plotinus, in whom we are to hear the voice of Plato sounding again, and Ficino's own *persona* as he inserts himself into the Platonic tradition as another mouthpiece for Plato. Ficino certainly developed a Platonic style of his own and this is highlighted here, with frequent reference to material from Ficino's *Letters*, where it is easy to demonstrate Ficino at play with rhetorical techniques – instances of his revival of the Platonic tradition of *serio ludere*, that is, approaching the most serious topics through play. In such passages, along with the use of masks goes the additional technique of *enargeia*, bringing scenes vividly to life. One example of this is the description of Plato's Academy and its inner sanctum presented in a letter to Braccio Martelli and also in the proem to his Plotinus lectures. These are just the kind of dramatic settings that allow the masks to be deployed to good effect. But the use of *personae* and *enargeia* runs throughout his works.

Just as Ficino was unusual in taking on the task of translating the entire Platonic corpus and the later traditions of Platonism, so is Robichaud unusual in tacking the broad sweep of all Ficino's works, placing them in their wider context in the history of thought. He stresses the interconnectedness of all Plato's dialogues throughout Ficino's work, and his use of a full range of late-antique commentators even in the early stages of his work, though he did not publish his translations of them until much later. For all its complexity, this book therefore provides an exceptionally fine introduction for early students of Renaissance philosophy or literature to Ficino as a writer and thinker. In this context, it is to be regretted that a number of philosophical terms are used without explanation (e.g. diegetic, agon, thiasus, prolepsis) although others, such as *enargeia* are explained really well.

In separate chapters (3, 4 and 5), he examines the use of three particular masks or mouthpieces, those of Socrates, Pythagoras and Plato. Robichaud reminds us that when Plato presents ideas through the masks of the former two, it is perhaps because they themselves left nothing written and much unsaid. Meanwhile the character of Ficino's beloved 'divine Plato' is also seen as a mask, and in some contexts this Plato merges with the anonymous Athenian Stranger of the *Laws* and the *Epinomis*. One effect of this triple examination is the emergence of an especially strong Pythagorean voice in Ficino's readings of Plato. An appendix lists 28 different Pythagoreans to whom Ficino makes allusion. The method of counting is not perfect, but Robichaud notes that the 22 Pythagoreans living before Plato, or contemporary with him, are named on 428 pages of Ficino's *Opera omnia*. A further 57 page-mentions cover the later Pythagoreans. These compare with 117 references to Hermes, 148 to Orpheus and 83 to Zoroaster. Of the 428 earlier Pythagorean mentions, Pythagoras *ipse* accounts for only 133 pages, but the others include Parmenides, with 97 and Timaeus with 86, both perhaps speaking through the pages of Plato. It is at any rate clear that there is an emphatic point being made about the Pythagorean character of Ficino's Platonism, and perhaps even Platonism itself.

A Platonic motif that appears frequently in Ficino's writing and is correctly emphasised by Robichaud, is the notion of a sense of family among groups of philosophers, be it the *prisci theologi*, Plato's family or Ficino's own Academy. Related to this are the notions of begetting books as children, playing the midwife, and arguably, too, the concept of the *alter ego*, a role assigned to several of Ficino's so-called 'special friends', including Giovanni

Cavalcanti, Pier Leone da Spoleto, Martin Prenninger and Filippo Valori. Ficino sometimes even refers to himself as being discernible within their masks. He also sets great store by the idea that we learn about ourselves through our contact and conversation with the soul of another. Ficino certainly valued the conversations that allowed him to shape very precisely the eventual written forms of his teachings, whether he mentions them playfully as masks for himself or not. Two of his valued fellow philosophers, Giorgio Antonio Vespucchi and Cristoforo Landino, generally escape the playful touch: one senses Ficino's highly-developed sensitivity to appropriateness of occasion.

There are further passages Robichaud has collected dealing with instances of one person speaking *sub persona* of another, including the use of a Dionysian mask in the dedication letter to his commentary on the *Mystical Theology*. Employing a deliberate confusion between Dionysus the god and Dionysius the philosopher (a person already wearing a mask as Paul's convert, though Ficino seems to have been unaware of that additional twist), he speaks of the latter as reaching an ecstatic state, « surpassing the natural limits of understanding » and being « wondrously transformed into the beloved god », an accomplishment that makes his apparently drunken dithyrambic utterances permissible even in a Christian context (p. 61).

This brings us to a major point of interpretation running through the whole book: the assumption, for which ample grounds are given, that the philosophy of the ancients can be brought into practical use in a Christian context. This is presented in several ways. The first is through a discussion of virtue ethics. Points are raised in relation to various texts and authors to show that right action leads to *eudaimonia*, in the sense of personal happiness and well-being. But Ficino is keen to pursue much further the connection with the Christian life. In discussing the goal of philosophy as early as his *De amore* (1469) and the very first pair of letters in his collection, and as reiterated on many occasions throughout his works, Ficino presents the goal of Platonism as one of becoming godlike, and reaching a state of bliss. « Philosophy », says Robichaud (p. 83) « prepares the inborn qualities of the intellect to receive the infused light of divine power or virtue to help it assimilate to God ». All the stages of a Platonic education lead in this direction, from the principles of mathematics to the study of astronomy, which inculcates a sense of wonder. From wonder will come a passion to learn and the desire to be « initiated into the true and real mysteries by

receiving wisdom in her unity, in mind which is itself a unity » (p. 207). The glorious realities will then be seen « face to face ».

This argument reaches its culmination in relation to the *Epinomis*. Robichaud says, « The *Epinomis* confirms a thesis at the heart of Ficino's hermeneutical framework for interpreting Plato's corpus, namely that the goal of Platonism is the divinization of man » (p. 206). The *Epinomis* was not regarded as vital by Plotinus, nor even as definitely authentic by Proclus, but for Ficino it seems to have embodied a fully ordered approach to knowledge of divine certainties in a sense that appears also to have been apprehended by Iamblichus (p. 212). Thus, the *skopos* of the *Epinomis* as stated by Ficino, is that « once the intellect has undergone all of this [dialectical training], and once it is united to itself, and through itself returns in unity with God, he [Plato] says that it will be as happy (*beatam*) as it can according to its capacities, and that in the afterlife it will be altogether blissful ». (Ficino reuses *beatam*, though Robichaud has varied the translation to underline his point). *Henosis* is thus the aim, and virtue ethics and dialectic both lead there. The kind of divine happiness in question can be achieved in the present life, as Plotinus had shown by example on at least four occasions. Robichaud therefore maintains that Ficino, while maintaining a great reverence for Augustine, goes far beyond Augustine, who rejected Platonism as a path to anything a Christian could recognise as divine (p. 217–218).

There is much detailed discussion of particular works of Ficino, as well as useful sections confirming their dating. But the main thrust of Robichaud's argument is to point up Ficino's own overriding concern, namely, to show how philosophy serves to purify the mind and convert it towards contemplation. Discursive exercises can lead to noetic contact with divine truth, and such contact, being a contact with divine light, brings to life in the individual qualities that were innate but previously undeveloped. Here Ficino is drawing especially on the vocabulary of Iamblichus, an author Robichaud has shown to be significant from the very start of his career. This contact with the divine light and fire may ultimately lead to a level of understanding that cannot be expressed in speech. In the *argumentum* to Plato's second letter, Ficino speaks of the different styles, the highest of which is that which aims at a sacred silence (p. 223). This, too, is the silence and darkness which Dionysius extols.

As Robichaud points out, Ficino sometimes treads « the exegetical fault line between orthodoxy and heterodoxy » (p. 203). Ficino himself seems

constantly aware of this, and another great merit of Robichaud's work is his sensitivity to Ficino's own concerns. Robichaud makes a full investigation of how Ficino contrives to bring the incarnation back into his philosophical arguments, using the expression '*si deus fiat homo*' – a textual variant – to enable him to do so. This is discussed with especial reference to the letter entitled *Concordia Mosis et Platonis* (p. 195–200) and, together with the *Confirmatio Christianorum per Socratica*, it provides some degree of support for the suggestion that the Platonists somehow foresaw the coming of Christ. So although it would appear that the incarnation has a very low profile in Ficino's writings, because they are based on Plato and the Platonic commentators, this does not detract from the centrality of Christian orientation in his whole approach. One might similarly observe an absence of commentary on the passion, the concept of sin and several other Christian doctrines, yet it would be wholly wrong to regard Ficino as a thinker for whom Christianity mattered less than Platonic philosophy.

In sum, this is a work of outstanding scholarship. It does of course contain much that is already known to scholars in the field, all of which is duly acknowledged and appropriately referenced. But it also adds the fruits of Robichaud's own prior articles. He succeeds in bringing together an impressive amount of material in a fresh, useful and enlivening way, and without ever allowing the main lines of argument to be buried in the considerable mass of detail. This is a substantial achievement for a first monograph, and Robichaud deserves congratulation.

BRIAN A. CATLOS, SHARON KINOSHITA (EDS.), *CAN WE TALK MEDITERRANEAN? CONVERSATIONS ON AN EMERGING FIELD IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN STUDIES*, SPRINGER INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING – PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, Basingstoke – Cham 2017 (MEDITERRANEAN PERSPECTIVES), XXI + 153 PP., ISBN 9783319557267 (EBK), 9783319557250 (HBK), 9783319857329 (PBK).

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‘Mediterranean Studies’ are in vogue in the English-speaking world. Universities advertise posts in Mediterranean history, and occasionally literature. The number of journals addressing the history of the Mediterranean increases – including this one. But no one quite agrees what the subject, if it is one, is about. Some scholars, such as the anthropologist Michael Herzfeld, even express doubts about whether it is about anything coherent. Braudel’s assumptions about the essential unity of the Mediterranean region (very broadly delineated) are challenged by an emphasis on local variation in the writings of Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, particularly their massive book *The Corrupting Sea*, published in 2000. So it was a good idea of two of the most active promoters of things Mediterranean to bring together a few experts at the University of Colorado, Boulder, in 2012, to discuss the coherence of the subject. This slim volume records not just the papers delivered but the spirited conversations that followed. Since the book is about the coherence of the subject, it is necessary to point out that these conversations are not always coherent in themselves. But that is, in a way, the point: by the end the editors, along with other presenters, have agreed that fuzzy edges serve best, and that we must not be too prescriptive about the nature of ‘Mediterranean Studies’.

At the heart of the book is the debate around *The Corrupting Sea*, and Peregrine Horden is present to make his own statements about what that book was trying to achieve. It thus follows on from the collection of essays edited by William Harris, *Rethinking the Mediterranean* (Oxford, 2005). Placing *The Corrupting Sea* at the centre of a book about the Middle Ages and the early modern period is at first sight rather odd, since Horden and Purcell were mainly interested in examples from the ancient and early medieval periods. But it does raise the question of the applicability of their model (connectivity, abatement, etc.) to later periods.

Horden gives few clues about the contents of vol. 2 of *The Corrupting Sea*, provisionally entitled *Liquid Continent*, which has always been a problem in judging their undoubtedly extraordinary achievement in vol. 1: to what extent issues such as human agency will be addressed in vol. 2 is left unclear in Horden's comments in *Can We Talk Mediterranean?*

Horden does engage with the position taken in my own *The Great Sea* (Penguin – OUP, London – New York 2011; the bibliographical information given is incorrect), where there is a consistent attempt to challenge Braudel's determinism and to place humans at the centre of the discussion. He is also doubtful whether the history of the Mediterranean should be written, as I do there, as the history of the maritime space plus its islands, shores and ports. But I have always insisted that there are many ways of writing what can claim to be Mediterranean history, even if I have doubts whether an article, on, say, political developments within Greece under the colonels counts nearly as well as one about the development of the trade of Piraeus, ancient or modern. To write a history of the Mediterranean or any other sea that emphasises connections across the sea, commercial, cultural and colonial, thereby placing the maritime space at the forefront, has a distinct advantage: it avoids the dilemma about how far inland historians of the Mediterranean should probe, without denying that the origins of many of the products, people and power-relationships have to be sought in the hinterland. He questions the periodisation suggested in *The Great Sea*, expecting something more unorthodox – but placing the great transformation in the late medieval Mediterranean after the arrival of the Black Death in 1347 rather than after the opening of transatlantic routes in 1492 is surely unorthodox. Indeed, he lays strong emphasis throughout on the need to challenge: almost, one might think, for the sake of it, as if he cannot get the Socratic style of traditional Oxford tutorials out of his head.

Although Horden dominates this little book, there are offerings on the literary history of the Mediterranean, by Sharon Kinoshita, and on early modern art history by Claire Farago. In the obscurely titled but otherwise very thoughtful chapter by Cecily J. Hilsdale, « The Thalassal Optic », Hilsdale makes the powerful point that ascribing particular origins to an object, such as a Fatimid rock-crystal ewer, rather misses the point: we need to ask how that object was seen in Venice, or wherever it arrived – though there is also a danger of pressing her argument so far that something of genuine interest, the way objects were actually made, is pushed off the stage. Farago makes plain the relative lack of a Mediterranean perspective among post-medieval art historians, but she also provides telling criticisms of Hans Belting's assumptions about the role of Arabic optics in the Italian Renaissance, and singles out the writings of Deborah Howard on Venice and the East for special, and surely well-deserved, praise. Kinoshita uses the twelfth-century romance *Cligés* as a fascinating lever into the history not of

Mediterranean literature, but of literature about the Mediterranean. In the space available, it is no surprise that she has to deal with Boccaccio's *Decameron* very quickly, but that book, and the other collections of tales produced in Florence, Naples and elsewhere, are marvellous sources for anyone interested in the mercantile Mediterranean of the late Middle Ages.

This short book is, then, thought-provoking and entertaining, and it provides a helpful overview of where we stand in several areas of scholarship, historical, literary and art historical. It also shows a welcome awareness that there are areas of the Mediterranean that need to be brought more fully into discussion, notably north Africa, though one could add Sardinia and Corsica too. It should serve as the starting-point for new research within and across disciplines.

FLAVIA BUZZETTA, *MAGIA NATURALIS E SCIENTIA CABALAE IN GIOVANNI PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA*, LEO S. OLSCHKI EDITORE, FIRENZE 2019 (STUDI PICHIANI, 20), 342 PP., ISBN 9788822266309.

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PICO THE MAGICIAN AND KABBALIST. IS IT REALLY THE CASE?

This book is among the latest additions to the ever-growing scholarly attention, and the publications which usually follow such attention, focused on the thought and writings of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494). More specifically, this book is a recent addition to a particular trend in the historiography on Pico which probably began in modern times with Frances Yates's 1964 volume on Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic tradition, where a chapter was dedicated to magic and Kabbalah in Pico, and reached its high point with Giulio Busi's (and his collaborators') ambitious project, *The Kabbalistic Library of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola*, aimed at publishing critical editions with translations of Flavius Mithridates's Latin renderings of a host of Kabbalistic texts commissioned by Pico.

Overall, these are positive and encouraging signs which might just help to change a widespread derogatory view concerning Renaissance philosophy and its place in western philosophical canon – a philosophy of which Pico, beside Machiavelli, are perhaps the best-known representatives. But one should point out one problem: the main reason for the relative popularity of these two thinkers is because they seem perfectly fit for discussions which usually have very little to do with the Renaissance and everything to do with one or another version of what is today perceived as 'modernity'. In other words: they are usually discussed outside of their historical context.

Obviously, this is not the case with Flavia Buzzetta's book which is a serious scholarly attempt to clarify and discuss the philosophical and theological significance and implications of natural magic and the science of Kabbalah in several texts of Pico, such as the *Commento sopra una canzone d'amore*, the *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, the *900 Theses* (1486), the *Apology* (1487) and the *Heptaplus* (1489). It is important to point out at this stage that this book is not focused on the sources of Pico's accounts of magic and Kabbalah as such – although it naturally refers to and discusses many such sources – but on the conceptual

significance and implications of these two branches of knowledge for Pico's thought. But let us go back to this rather elusive, 'the historical context'.

Determining that which is at the centre of a historical context is by no means an easy task. Nevertheless it is an important part of scholarship which, in this regard, should keep the balance between detailed studies of particular case-studies on the one hand, and drawing some general conclusions based on the results of these detailed studies, on the other. These methodological concerns are most relevant when one has to determine to what extent, for instance, Pico's personal interest in magic and Kabbalah reflects a more general interest in these disciplines during the Renaissance, and in what sense such an interest is unique and different in comparison to previous historical contexts. In other words: do magic and Kabbalah play any significant role in the common philosophical and theological discourse (that is, the scientific discourse) of the Renaissance? The assumption underlying most, if not all, of the studies dedicated to Pico and his accounts of magic and Kabbalah is that these subjects were very important for him, but I am afraid that there is here a gap between what is assumed and what is really the case in terms of the actual historical evidence. As far as I know, very little scholarly efforts have been dedicated to other Renaissance philosophers and intellectuals, before and after the generation of Ficino and Pico, in Italy and outside Italy, and their interest in magic, Kabbalah and related disciplines. I can certainly understand the contemporary attraction to, and focus on, magic and Kabbalah, with their glamour of mystical teachings and multicultural dialogue; I most certainly admire the competence of some of the scholars in this field and their command of Latin and Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabic, very often working on texts which are available in manuscript form only – and yet these methodological concerns must be addressed. Virtuoso scholarship is not a substitute for proper contextualization which is still a desideratum.

All these concerns are relevant for Pico's case: to what extent did magic and Kabbalah play a significant role in his formation and development as a philosopher and influenced his thought? The present book by Flavia Buzzetta certainly aims at showing that natural magic and the science of Kabbalah are essential for understanding Pico. It also accepts the assumption that these disciplines represent a 'Renaissance topos' (e.g., p. 8, where the author refers only to magic, and mentions Ficino and Pico as the sole representatives of this topos).

The reader of this book will be faced with an overwhelming abundance of rhetoric in the introduction which does not do justice to the genuine research it aims to introduce. Here is only a flavour of it: « Secondo la mia lettura, Pico proietta la teoria della *magia naturalis* sullo sfondo della sua concezione dell'uomo come *opus indiscretae imaginis*, essere camaleontico, microcosmo dinamico che compendia tutti gli elementi del creato, creatura priva di una natura predefinita,

chiamata del suo Creatore ad autodeterminare liberamente la propria natura nell'auspicabile direzione di un'elevazione alla natura angelica e di una suprema unione mistica con Dio » (p. 9). Another problem is the emphasis on a « teorizzazione pichiana » and « sistematizzazione » (p. 10), as if Pico and Ficino, Vernia, Pomponazzi, Nifo, Vielmi and their many other contemporaries were eighteenth century philosophers and were all following only one method of doing philosophy.

The book is divided into two parts: the first (ch. 1–2) focuses on the place of natural magic in Pico's thought; the second (ch. 3–4) focuses on the place of Kabbalah; the discussion in chapter 5 somewhat combines these two themes and deals with a theory of causality in Pico in relation to practical magic and practical Kabbalah.

Clarifying the exact meaning and role of natural magic in Pico's writings stands at the centre of the first part of the book. The author tends in this part and in other places in the book to provide rather long citations, both in the body of the text and in the footnotes, of other scholars, which, on many occasions, could be summarized in a much shorter form. This aspect seems like a reminiscence of a Ph.D. dissertation which should have been cut short while preparing the book. Rhetoric still plays a role here (e.g. p. 21: « Il mago rinascimentale si presenta come un sacerdote del reale... »), but slowly it becomes balanced by means of valuable analysis of Pico's texts.

The author discusses the necessary intellectual context for a scholarly account of magic in the Renaissance before moving on to focus on Pico and his 'general theory of magic', by which she means looking for a philosophical-cultural unified project and the role of magic and Kabbalah in it (p. 41–42). The observations on p. 52, fn. 25, regarding natural magic as « *sapientia* relativa alla realtà divina », and the comparison between Pico and Pierleone da Spoleto, concerning hierarchical distinction between 'the wise' and 'the prophets', based on marginal notes in a manuscript found by the author, are a good example of the high level of scholarship found in this book. It would have been interesting to compare Pico's critique of the illegitimate magic in the *Oration* (discussed, e.g., on p. 53–54) to his critique of astrology. And indeed, the author does discuss the relation between magic and astrology later on and makes some intriguing remarks (p. 117–120). But I see no point in citing Plato in Italian (e.g., p. 56, fn. 34), or using transliteration for citations from Greek (e.g., p. 58). This reflects an inconsistent approach, since the author throughout the book provides Latin citations in the body of the text and without an Italian translation. I am aware of the fact that this is still the common approach in Italy, and yet one needs to point out that in the case of a piece of technical scholarship like the present book, Plato should be cited in Greek, and Greek letters must be used. The publisher Leo Olschki has a reputation of publishing some excellent pieces of technical

scholarship over the years; and in the light of the current threats to scholarly standards one needs to encourage this tendency and simply call for more consistency.

An important account based on Pico's *Oration* is presented on p. 62, according to which magic does not produce supernatural miracles but rather brings to light 'miracles' that are already natural; the *magus* is thus the *artifex* of such miracles, he brings into actuality that which is latent and potential in nature. While providing a relevant citation from Plotinus (again, in Italian and with transliteration of some key expressions!), and alluding to « teoria della simpatia-sinfonia universale » (p. 63), the author might consider another echo of this Stoic and Neoplatonic feature of nature found in a very standard scholastic work which contains all these 'theoretical' elements of natural magic.

Let us have a look at a piece from Giles of Rome's *Reportatio* of his commentary on the *Sentences*, 2, q. 4, found in the excerpts of Godfrey of Fontaines:

Deus enim in prima creatione rerum non solum creavit naturas rerum, sed etiam indidit eis aptitudines quibus alia ex ipsis producuntur, scilicet qualitates activas et passivas et rationes seminales, que non sunt nisi ordo materie ad formam secundum quod forma educitur ex materia.¹

The question is, of course, to what extent does Pico's 'theory' of natural magic contains any new elements.

Another important implication of natural magic which is pointed out by the author is that it is a practical knowledge that complements the contemplation through which a spiritual elevation from nature towards God takes place (p. 73). But regarding natural magic as the practical part of natural science (p. 88) means an important break from the standard Aristotelian framework, where natural philosophy belongs to 'theory' and with no sign of any practical aspect. While the author does not say anything about this, she provides a very helpful typology of different kinds of magic in Pico (p. 93–120).

Moving on to Kabbalah and its influence on Pico, it is quite clear that the author is competent in Hebrew (I have found only one mistake which is probably a typo: on p. 165, גבריל should obviously be גבריאל; I am not sure regarding the transliteration *derek* for דרך on p. 189), and familiar with the Hebrew sources and with the relevant scholarly literature.

Emphasizing that the Kabbalistic tradition is not purely one tradition (p. 125) is crucial for determining just how complicated it is to reconstruct its role and influence on Pico. The author's references to the *Liber de homine* (e.g., p. 135,

¹ GILES OF ROME, *Reportatio lecturee super libros I-IV Sententiarum. Reportatio Monacensis. Excerpta Godefridi de Fontibus*, ed. CONCETTA LUNA, SISMEL, Firenze 2003 (Corpus philosophorum Medii Aevi. Testi e studi, 17. Aegidii Romani Opera omnia, 3: Opera theologica, 2), p. 514.

fn. 31) in Mithridates's translation (a text which is still in manuscript form), where examples of 'Christian reformulations' can be found, should have been cited and further discussed in the body of the text instead, perhaps, of some of the scholarly literature which is again extensively cited and discussed in this part as well. Scholars might like to hear more about other translators of Kabbalistic texts from Sicilian!, associated with Pierleone da Spoleto and their legacy (e.g., p. 136), instead of some of the longer accounts of modern scholars (e.g., p. 140 and 143).

The author's statement at the beginning of Chapter 4 that « Pico è il primo studioso ad offrire alla fine del Quattrocento una prima sintesi, seppure aforistica, della complessa speculazione cabbalistica » (p. 145) serves as a working assumption which is, perhaps, too dogmatic, and yet the command shown by the author in this chapter of Kabbalistic texts and their contexts is impressive. She thoroughly examines references to the Kabbalah and Kabbalistic elements and their sources (including, once again, important notes on the *Liber de homine* – e.g., on p. 152, fn. 21) in Pico's *Commento sopra una canzone d'amore* (p. 146–158), before moving on to focus of Pico's *Oration, Theses* and *Apology* (p. 158–195). At times the author seems to put too much pressure on the sources and tend to be too speculative, for instance: « A mio avviso è possibile che Pico utilizzi la denominazione di *scientia cabalae* con una specifica valenza concettuale, per indicare la redazione del sapere cabbalistico da parte dell'uomo, dunque il passaggio dalla rivelazione divina dei misteri cabbalistici (per cui la cabbala è una scienza rivelata, come data a priori) all'appropriazione umana di tali misteri (per cui la cabbala diviene anche una scienza scoperta ed acquisita, a posteriori) » (p. 163). This is obviously a matter of scholarly temperament rather than of scholarly standards. The comments on p. 164 regarding the relation between Kabbalah and three disciplines – theology, metaphysics and philosophy – seem to have a particular importance, just as the comments on p. 187 regarding Kabbalah as *scientia revelata* and *scientia humana*, or indeed the speculations regarding speculative and practical Kabbalah on p. 195–197.

Things become more coherent in terms of the overall themes of this book when the author discusses the relation between natural magic and practical Kabbalah (e.g., p. 209–211). Things then become more interesting when the author criticizes Wirszubski and others for rejecting the possibility that Pico was influenced by Hebrew texts on magic (echoing, in turn, ancient and medieval Greek, Latin and Arabic texts on magic), which were related by him to practical Kabbalah (e.g., p. 227–240). Once again we see how the practical part of Kabbalah is the catalyst for the actualization of more theoretical disciplines: « Nella visione pichiana, la *pars practica scientiae cabalae* rappresenta il versante operativo-applicativo della cabala e costituisce la disciplina capace di tradurre in atto le potenzialità intrinseche ai diversi domini del reale di competenza della

metaphysica formalis e della *theologia inferior* » (p. 243). In this regard, practical Kabbalah can be considered as Kabbalistic magic, claims the author (p. 247).

The last chapter discusses the implications of all the previous analyses, now defined by the author as « *simpatia universale* », on what the author calls « la teoria della causalità » (p. 249). This is an attempt to present a coherent cosmological picture based mainly on Pico's *Commento sopra una canzone d'amore*, the *Oration*, the *Theses* and the *Apology*. The problem, as far as I am concerned, is in the anachronistic use of the term 'theory' here and throughout the book. Looking for an 'ontological model' in Pico's *Theses* (p. 259) is far beyond the historical evidence that we have. The suggestion regarding a first universal cause and a second intermediate cause (p. 270) is interesting, but the whole discussion is very speculative. Luckily, this book contains enough sections of well-documented and well-contextualized analyses which do balance the speculative, and at times anachronistic efforts to find a 'general and coherent theory' of magic and Kabbalah (p. 283) in Pico's texts.

ANTONI BORDOY, *ENSEÑAR FILOSOFÍA EN LOS ALBORES DE LA UNIVERSIDAD (1200–1240): ESTUDIO HISTÓRICO ACOMPAÑADO DEL ACCESO DE LOS FILÓSOFOS A LAS SIETE ARTES LIBERALES*, SINDÉRESIS, MADRID 2018, 348 PP., ISBN 9788416262533 (PBK)

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El volumen que tenemos ocasión de reseñar en estas páginas es, como su propio subtítulo indica, un « Estudio histórico acompañado del *Acceso de los filósofos a las siete artes liberales* ». En efecto, si bien podría afirmarse que el objetivo principal del libro es presentar por primera vez en traducción castellana el texto latino del *Acceso*, la magnitud del estudio histórico que lo acompaña hace que ambos – estudio y traducción– tengan aquí igual peso y relevancia, hasta el punto de que sería igual de válido afirmar que el texto acompaña al estudio o que el estudio acompaña al texto. Decimos esto porque, a pesar del epígrafe, es obvio que todo el estudio introductorio está motivado por (y orientado hacia) la traducción del texto que se presenta en las páginas 233-317, aunque –como acabamos de comentar– el contenido de las primeras doscientas páginas del libro es tan interesante y provechoso que no cabe considerarlo una mera introducción a la edición, por lo que es lícito darle la vuelta al enunciado.

El autor ha dividido el libro en cuatro partes, ordenadas de lo más general a lo más específico, aunque en realidad la cuarta y última parte está conformada por los típicos anexos (bibliografía, glosario de términos técnicos y tabla de nombres propios) y la tercera a la edición del texto. Las dos primeras partes están destinadas, respectivamente, a estudiar el origen del sistema universitario, especialmente en lo referente a la Universidad de París, y a analizar la enseñanza de la filosofía en la primera fase de esta universidad. Dejémoslo, pues, siguiendo de nuevo el subtítulo de la obra, en dos partes bien diferenciadas: Un magnífico estudio introductorio (partes 1 y 2) y una excelente traducción del texto (parte 3) con un aparato crítico que es –digámoslo ya– la contribución más importante de esta obra al conocimiento del *Acceso* y prueba incuestionable de la erudición de Bordoy al respecto.

En el estudio introductorio al volumen se analiza lo que viene siendo el título de la obra, *Enseñar filosofía en los albores de la Universidad (1200-1250)*. En la primera parte, Bordoy se preocupa de los diferentes factores que llevaron a la creación de

una nueva institución –la Universidad–, su desarrollo histórico en Occidente, los cambios en las instituciones educativas medievales y la transformación, en fin, del modelo educativo europeo hasta llegar a las primeras universidades en París, Salerno y Bolonia. Centrándose más adelante en la Universidad de París, institución que «sin duda tuvo un impacto mayor en el desarrollo del pensamiento medieval» (p. 45), el autor analiza la evolución paralela de los elementos que incidieron en la primera enseñanza de la filosofía: por un lado, las transformaciones en los sistemas educativos que llevan a la aparición de la Universidad; por otro, los cambios en las estructuras de las ciencias y la relación entre las artes liberales, la filosofía y la teología.

Bordoy distingue aquí dos períodos bien claros en el desarrollo de la Universidad de París: el primero, desde sus inicios hasta la década de 1250, el segundo a partir de ese año. Si bien la crítica se ha centrado por lo general en el segundo de estos períodos como el de mayor importancia, para Bordoy ignorar el primero, o considerarlo una simple etapa embrionaria de los grandes avances y discusiones que se produjeron más adelante podría, no obstante, «constituir un error» (p. 15). De ahí que el autor se centre precisamente en esa etapa inicial de la universidad parisina, en la estructura y funcionamiento de su Facultad de Artes y en el resurgir de la filosofía entre las artes liberales en la primera mitad de este siglo. Para enlazar los contenidos de esta primera parte con el texto del *Acceso*, Bordoy advierte que la década de 1230–1240 (fecha probable de composición de este documento) fue clave en el paso de la filosofía de *disciplina* a *scientia*.

Profundizando más en la relación entre el *Acceso* y la Universidad de París, la segunda parte del libro analiza la enseñanza de la filosofía en dicha institución durante el primero de los períodos señalados por Bordoy. Aquí se pasa revista al programa didáctico del *Acceso* en su contexto de composición, al estado general de las fuentes y textos en la década de 1230–1240 o a las regulaciones en torno a los textos y al curso escolar. De manera más importante, y debido a que la educación universitaria del siglo XIII estaba conformada «sobre la base metodológica de la *lectio*, cuyo punto de referencia [...] toma los textos como punto de partida» (p. 154), dentro de esta sección se analizan los diferentes textos referenciados en el *Acceso*, desde autores clásicos como Boecio, Euclides o Platón, hasta otros más secundarios como al-Fârâbî, Isidoro de Sevilla o Isaac Israeli. En total, unos catorce autores y más de veinte obras que informaron, directa o indirectamente, la composición del *Acceso* y cuyo análisis supone uno de los aciertos más interesantes del libro.

Vayamos, pues, al texto del *Acceso*. Para su traducción, Bordoy ha descartado las ediciones clásicas de Grabmann (1912) y Gauthier (1963) y ha tomado como texto base la edición de Lafleur de 1988. En principio podría objetarse que se haya optado por una edición preexistente como base para el texto que aquí se presenta, pero recordemos que el propósito de Bordoy es presentar, no una

edición, sino una traducción al castellano de un importante documento que, debido en parte a carecer de traducción española, ha pasado inadvertido a la mayor parte de la crítica. Además, es necesario indicar que la edición de Lafleur es la más completa de todas, basándose en un total de siete manuscritos del *Accessus* latino, cinco de ellos completos y dos truncados, y que Bordoy ha llevado a cabo un exhaustivo contraste de la edición que le ha llevado a corregir allí donde ha sido necesario (véase p. 228). Por último, se han aplicado a la traducción unos criterios metodológicos correctos y que van destinados a ofrecer una traducción clara y legible a la vez que se respetan –siempre y cuando sea posible– las particularidades y el estilo del original latino. Nada que objetar, entonces, a un texto tan interesante como legible que se presenta aquí por primera vez en castellano.

El documento es importante por sobradas razones. En primer lugar, es uno de los pocos textos que se han conservado de ese primer período que va de 1200 a 1250, en particular, como ya se ha comentado, del decenio 1230–1240. Dicho período se caracteriza, según Bordoy, por el laconismo de sus fuentes. La mayoría de maestros de artes que en este período enseñaban filosofía « no han pasado a la historia ni de ellos se conservan textos » (p. 16), aunque sí que contamos con varias « guías del estudiante » de las que el *Acceso* es « el primer texto de este género que se conoce, y sobre él se construirán la mayor parte de los que vendrán después » (p. 17). Además, es la guía más completa de cuantas se han conservado y se diferencia de las demás en un aspecto crucial: no se trata ya de una reflexión general sobre la filosofía, sino de una exposición destinada a unos contenidos que se imparten en el marco de una institución concreta. Precisamente a estos aspectos se dedica la introducción a la tercera parte. En las páginas preliminares a la traducción del texto, Bordoy repasa detalladamente los contenidos de esta guía (presentación general de la filosofía, discusión sobre los aspectos que afectan al cuadrivio, exposición de los contenidos de los cursos) y las diferencias con los otros ejemplos conservados.

Por último, quizás la mejor contribución de Bordoy al estudio del *Acceso* sea el aparato crítico que acompaña a la traducción. La erudición que se demuestra en las más de setecientas notas a pie que informan el texto es impresionante. Más allá de los comentarios críticos a la edición utilizada como base –que también los hay–, el autor aprovecha el aparato crítico para desgranar, uno a uno, todos los problemas y particularidades del texto, y para explicar detalladamente cada uno de los conceptos (filosóficos, matemáticos, etc.) citados en el *Acceso*, que no son pocos. Esto supone no solo un conocimiento profundo de los libros y autores clásicos a los que se hace referencia en el texto, sino también de las discusiones y conceptos filosóficos y matemáticos de la época. Especialmente interesantes son las explicaciones referentes a la *Aritmética* y *De institutione musica* de Boecio, a la *Geometría* y *Elementa* de Euclides, a la obra *De nuptiis* de Marciano Capela, o el *De*

sphera de Juan de Sacrobosco, por citar únicamente unos pocos casos. Estas breves líneas no pueden hacer justicia a la riqueza y erudición de un aparato crítico que es, como decimos, la aportación más sólida de Bordoy al conocimiento de este texto.

Queda claro, entonces, que el eje estructural del libro es la presentación de la primera traducción castellana del *Acceso* con un copioso aparato crítico. El resto de partes, pues, se ha estructurado en torno a este documento, aunque, siguiéndole el juego al autor, no es tampoco incorrecto considerar que es el texto el que acompaña al estudio introductorio. De todas formas, las dos primeras partes se centran fundamentalmente en los estudios de filosofía en la Universidad de París durante la primera mitad del siglo XIII precisamente porque allí y entonces se compuso el *Acceso*. Asimismo, los anexos de la cuarta parte dependen fundamentalmente de este texto. Si bien el glosario de términos técnicos sí puede contribuir, como dice el autor, «a una mejor lectura y comprensión de los contenidos del libro en general» (p. 18), está claro que la tabla de nombres propios depende exclusivamente del texto del *Acceso*, y aquí sí hubiera sido legítimo exigir un índice onomástico y temático –con paginación–, puesto que, tal y como aparece aquí, es puramente testimonial.

En definitiva, este volumen es un sólido ejemplo de trabajo y erudición que cumple con creces su objetivo y demuestra los buenos resultados que pueden obtenerse cuando los proyectos se toman en serio. Tómese el texto del *Acceso* como un complemento al estudio introductorio o al estudio como un preliminar al texto, lo cierto es que hay que agradecerle a Bordoy el que hoy por hoy contemos con una traducción castellana de un documento tan importante y con un estudio de la filosofía como materia universitaria en los albores del siglo XIII tan interesante y apropiado como el que aquí se presenta.

JACOPO F. FALÀ, IRENE ZAVATTERO (EDS.), *DIVINE IDEAS IN FRANCISCAN THOUGHT (XIIITH–XIVTH CENTURY)*, ARACNE, ROMA 2018 (*FLUMEN SAPIENTIAE*. STUDI SUL PENSIERO MEDIEVALE, 8), XXVIII + 504 PP., ISBN 9788825521917.

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Il volume curato da Jacopo Francesco Falà e Irene Zavattero per la collana di studi sul pensiero medievale *Flumen Sapientiae* e dedicato alle dottrine dell'esemplarismo nella scuola francescana tra XIII e XIV secolo rappresenta un lodevole tentativo di rispondere contemporaneamente ad una mancanza e ad una esigenza. La mancanza è quella ravvisabile nella letteratura scientifica di ambito medievistico: se alcuni si sono concentrati sulle elaborazioni dei maestri più celebri, sono pressoché assenti lavori organici con un taglio tematico volti a ricostruire il problema filosofico-teologico delle idee divine, in quanto parametri della conoscibilità delle cose *ex parte Dei* e *ex parte hominis*, e lo *status quaestionis* sugli studi critici finora condotti. L'esigenza è quella reclamata dalla comunità scientifica in favore di un maggiore approfondimento del *topic*, dalle fondamenta storico-dottrinali fino alle soluzioni magistrali di basso e tardo Medioevo. Questo crescente interesse è stato incentivato negli ultimi anni anche dalla pubblicazione di nuovi testi in edizione critica incentrati proprio sullo statuto delle idee divine. È su questo solco che il volume si inserisce, con una forte spinta analitica che intende proseguirne e ampliarne lo sviluppo.

Come nota la curatrice Irene Zavattero nelle « Introductory Remarks », « In Augustine's Footsteps. The Doctrine of Ideas in Franciscan Thought » (p. XI–XXVII), l'applicazione della dottrina delle idee al discorso teologico e alla sistematizzazione concettuale della tradizione cristiana è affidata inizialmente alla mediazione di Agostino d'Ippona. A differenza di Platone, per il teologo africano l'esistenza di Dio non differisce dall'esistenza delle (sue) idee: esse rappresentano gli esemplari delle cose eternamente presenti nell'intelletto divino, nonché i criteri per la creazione di un mondo razionalmente ordinato. Dopo una versione – per così dire – 'ortodossa' dell'esemplarismo promossa dai primi maestri francescani (Bonaventura in testa) e strettamente conforme al detto agostiniano, nei successivi dibattiti universitari iniziano ad emergere nuove *quaestiones* intorno ad alcuni nodi problematici messi in luce dalle esigenze della

nuova scienza metafisica di impianto aristotelico. Se infatti le idee sono gli esemplari delle cose, di quali 'cose' si sta parlando? Le cose *già* create? Quelle *non ancora* create? Oppure quelle pensate da Dio e che pure non saranno *mai* create? Che dire delle cose astratte, immaginate, impossibili o assurde? È proprio l'abbondanza di soluzioni dottrinali che si registra tra XIII e XIV secolo ad aver reso opportuno, secondo i curatori del volume, un investimento più risoluto sulla ricostruzione di una storia delle dottrine dell'esemplarismo.

I tredici contributi sono disposti all'interno del volume miscelaneo seguendo indicativamente la cronologia degli autori di cui essi si occupano (dai primi maestri francescani a Guglielmo d'Ockham) o delle opere proposte in edizione critica. Chiude il libro una valutazione filosofica conclusiva di Alessandro D. Conti sull'esemplarismo tardo medievale, seguita da due indici (nomi e manoscritti).

Il primo contributo di Riccardo Saccenti, « *Sic bonum cognoscitur et similiter lux. Divine Ideas in the First Franciscan Masters (Alexander of Hales and John of La Rochelle)* » (p. 1-24), si concentra sull'impostazione del problema fornita dalla prima generazione di maestri interni all'Ordine: Alessandro di Hales (1185-1245) e Giovanni di La Rochelle (1200-1245). Glossando la *distinctio* 36 del primo libro delle *Sentenze* di Pietro Lombardo – testo cardine e punto di partenza per lo sviluppo del dibattito –, essi pongono le basi per la successiva (e più celebre) formulazione bonaventuriana. Con il Lombardo era già chiaro che l'adagio paolino per il quale *in ipso sunt omnia* (Rm. 11:36) deve essere interpretato non in senso sostanziale ('la natura di tutte le cose esiste in Dio') ma in senso conoscitivo ('Dio conosce tutte le cose'), di modo tale che la *scientia Dei* viene a configurarsi come la conoscenza che Dio ha di tutte le cose create. Le conquiste teologiche di Alessandro di Hales, « unavoidable basis for the discussion concerning divine ideas » (p. 17), chiariscono soprattutto il rapporto tra unità della conoscenza divina e molteplicità delle cose conosciute: il termine *sapientia*, usato al singolare, mette l'accento sull'unità del soggetto conoscente (Dio), mentre i termini *ratio* e *idea*, usati al plurale, indicano rispettivamente il modello di ciascuna cosa e il contenuto cognitivo di ciascun modello, alla base della molteplicità della creazione. Quest'ultima dipende dunque dalla molteplicità delle *rationes* e *ideae* (non viceversa), conosciute eternamente da Dio in quanto molteplici. Giovanni di La Rochelle, allievo e successore di Alessandro a Parigi, sembra spingersi ancora più oltre, estendendo il perimetro della *scientia Dei* al di là della creazione. La conoscenza di Dio, infatti, è infinita, così come sono infinite le idee divine. Con i termini *ydea* e *exemplar*, pertanto, non si indicano solamente i modelli eterni delle cose passate e presenti o delle cose future che saranno effettivamente esistenti, ma anche di quelle future non-esistenti. Tra 'modello' e 'cosa' si apre così lo spazio della creazione: tra le infinite idee possibili, solo alcune sono chiamate da Dio a far parte del regno dell'esistente.

Nel secondo contributo, « La negazione delle idee e l'“oscurantismo” dei filosofi. Bonaventura critico di Aristotele » (p. 25–49), Massimiliano Lenzi indaga le conseguenze dottrinali dell'atteggiamento anti-aristotelico di Bonaventura da Bagnoregio (1217–1274) (più cauto nel giovanile *Commento alle Sentenze*, più netto nelle *Collationes in Hexaëmeron*) e la sua strenua difesa delle 'idee' platoniche contro le tenebre della filosofia che dilaga nella Facoltà delle Arti. Tra i tre principali errori imputati da Bonaventura ad Aristotele vi è proprio l'*occultatio exemplaritatis*, ovvero la negazione delle idee e, quindi, dell'esistenza di un *exemplar* di natura divina come correlato di ciascuna cosa. Aristotelismo e cristianesimo in quest'ottica risultano del tutto incompatibili, ed è per questa ragione che il teologo francescano si appresta a riscattare l'esemplarismo cristiano e ad elaborare una « teoria consapevolmente antiaristotelica » (p. 33). Lenzi ne espone brevemente i caratteri principali: mentre nell'uomo l'idea è *forma impressa*, effetto esemplato, in Dio è *forma espressiva*, causa esemplare; come per Agostino, anche per Bonaventura le idee non sono altre rispetto a Dio, ma sono espressioni della natura divina rapportata alle cose; le idee non sono molteplici *secundum rem*, ma solo *secundum rationem*; le idee non sono solo criteri della scienza divina, ma anche principi della creazione; l'idea esprime la perfezione dell'esemplare alla quale le creature partecipano solo in modo imperfetto e derivato. In questo modo, secondo Lenzi, Bonaventura, da un lato, sembra offrire una teoria che mantiene salde trascendenza divina e perfezione delle idee divine; dall'altro, sembra restituire un'opinione schiettamente negativa e dunque meno 'cristianizzata' (contrariamente all'impresa maggiormente compatibilista di Tommaso d'Aquino) di una filosofia come quella aristotelica, che ai suoi occhi appare del tutto inaccettabile e inassimilabile.

Nel successivo contributo dal titolo « Divine Ideas and Beatific Vision by Peter John Olivi » (p. 51–73) Stève Bobillier si confronta con la dottrina di Pietro di Giovanni Olivi (1248–1298), associata qualche anno fa da Sylvain Piron ad una certa *destruction des idées*. Bobillier prende dapprima in rassegna il problema della pluralità delle idee in Dio: Olivi parla di *rationes reales*, ovvero di caratteristiche (*rationes*, non *res*) che coincidono con l'unica natura divina e che pure corrispondono a qualcosa di distinto, cioè alle diverse angolature in cui Dio si mostra. Ora, dal punto di vista di Dio le idee divine devono essere considerate in due diversi modi: « according to divine knowing, as quiddity; according to the divine willing, in their actual existence » (p. 71). La seconda parte del capitolo spiega invece come dal punto di vista del *viator* il collegamento tra idee eterne e intelletto sia pressoché insussistente: se la conoscenza umana procede aristotelicamente attraverso rappresentazioni, le idee divine non permettono all'intelletto di conoscere tutte le cose e la luce che da esse promana non può illuminare ogni nostra intellesione. Bobillier precisa dunque che la scelta di marginalizzare il ruolo delle idee divine resta essenzialmente legata al tentativo

di fugare « the dangers of the theory of illumination » (p. 71). Il segmento nel quale Olivi ricorre più convintamente alle idee divine è invece quello della visione beatifica, oggetto dell'ultima parte del contributo: il beato conosce l'essenza di Dio e le sue *rationes* faccia a faccia, senza l'aggiunta di supporti esterni. Si tratta però di una visione finita e contingente della natura infinita di Dio, come confermato dal risvolto 'volontarista' della soluzione, in base al quale « the intention of the blessed remains free, because God is the term of the voluntary act of their sight » (p. 69). Pertanto, benché Olivi disconosca effettivamente il ruolo delle idee divine sul piano della conoscenza umana delle realtà eterne (una conoscenza del tutto indisponibile all'uomo), tuttavia – sulla linea di quanto riconosciuto dallo stesso Piron – egli sembra non negare loro esistenza, efficacia e importanza.

Dopo questa prima panoramica sulle origini dottrinali del dibattito, i tre contributi successivi si focalizzano sull'opera di Giovanni Duns Scoto (1265/66–1308), mostrando in modi diversi come il dialogo a distanza tra il Dottor Sottile, Enrico di Gand (1217 ca.–1293) e altre *auctoritates* – magari minori, ma non meno importanti – apra la strada ad una nuova fase della filosofia francescana.

Il contributo congiunto di Timothy B. Noone e Carl A. Vater, « The Sources of Scotus's Theory of Divine Ideas » (p. 75–99), rilegge la soluzione scotiana sullo statuto delle idee divine alla luce degli argomenti di Pietro di Giovanni Olivi e Pietro di Trabes, due fonti finora poco considerate che avrebbero però esercitato un forte influsso sul pensiero del Sottile, come confermato dai testi inediti proposti in appendice: l'*appendix A* (p. 91–96) contiene la risposta all'argomento 16 della *quaestio* 6 del commento di Olivi al libro I delle *Sentenze*;¹ l'*appendix B* (p. 97–99) contiene la *distinctio* 35, *pars* 1, *articulus* 2 del commento allo stesso libro di Trabes,² amico e discepolo di Olivi. Si ricorda innanzitutto che la teoria più diffusa all'epoca dell'insegnamento di Scoto è quella dell'imitabilità dell'essenza divina: Dio conosce le cose altre da sé conoscendo la sua essenza in quanto imitabile; la relazione razionale con cui Dio conosce il modo in cui la sua essenza può essere imitata da una creatura possibile corrisponderebbe alla stessa idea divina. In questo quadro, la soluzione di Scoto appare contemporaneamente « traditional and innovative » (p. 76, 89): tradizionale poiché anche per il Sottile le idee divine appartengono ad un secondo livello di considerazione dell'intelletto e individuano comunque infinite relazioni tra Dio e creatura; innovativa poiché egli insiste sul fatto che le idee, in quanto relazioni di imitabilità, « are not how God knows possible creatures ». Per Scoto infatti è importante assicurare che (1) « God knows possible creatures directly » e che (2) « he has divine ideas because he already knows possible creatures » (p. 76). Gli

¹ B = Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Borgh. 358, fol. 157va.

² A = Assisi, Biblioteca comunale, MS 154, fol. 94rb.

studiosi mostrano tuttavia come questi elementi di originalità siano ispirati proprio dal contributo di Olivi e Trabes, tra i primi critici della teoria dell'imitabilità. Le obiezioni di Olivi si possono sintetizzare come segue: se le idee sono relazioni, allora (1) Dio può conoscere le cose solo indirettamente e (2) la relazione (*relatio*) risulta precedente ai termini della relazione (*relata*) – come sostenuto in modi diversi sia da Tommaso d'Aquino che da Enrico di Gand. Al contrario, per il filosofo francescano – come varrà poi anche per Scoto – « the terms of a relation must be known before the relation » (p. 79). Pietro di Trabes smaschera un'altra debolezza della teoria: è vero che l'idea individua l'essenza divina in quanto imitabile, ma ciò che la distingue (anche conoscitivamente) è la sua *ratio determinativa*, ovvero la sua disposizione ad essere creata da Dio; pertanto « imitability is not fundamental to the character of an idea » (p. 80). Gli studiosi si concentrano così sulla teoria di Scoto. Innanzitutto, il Sottile specifica che una cosa può essere conosciuta dall'intelletto divino solo in quanto « is included in the *ratio* of the object that primarily terminates the act of the potency », ovvero nell'essenza divina (p. 82). Ma ecco i due argomenti in cui si nota maggiormente l'influenza dei suoi predecessori francescani: (1) Dio conosce la quiddità di ciascuna cosa in base al suo grado d'essere e, dunque, di intelligibilità; (2) l'imitazione dell'essenza non comporta di per sé alcuna differenza specifica tra questo e quell'ente (*ens*). Ora, per avere una conoscenza distinta di una cosa bisogna conoscere la sua perfezione determinata, il che vuol dire che essa non può passare attraverso l'imitabilità, che pone infatti tutte le creature indistintamente in relazione all'essenza divina: « to know the fox determinately, God (or any knower) has to know the specific difference of the fox, not just the relation of imitability that it has to God » (p. 84). Vi è dunque qualcosa che viene prima dell'imitazione/relazione e che deve essere conosciuto precedentemente, ovvero la creatura nella sua « determinative perfection », concetto che Scoto sembra prendere in prestito proprio da Trabes. Il ragionamento segue parimenti la posizione di Olivi: Dio deve poter conoscere i termini della relazione prima della relazione stessa. Pertanto, l'idea divina secondo Scoto non è propriamente una relazione, ma « the creature itself existing objectively in the divine mind » (p. 86); solo nell'ultimo *instans naturae* in cui Dio compara la creatura conosciuta con il suo intelletto, essa sorge come relazione razionale. È in questo senso che « Olivi and Petrus seem to be a strong motivating factor for Scotus's own theory » (p. 88).

Il capitolo curato da Jacopo F. Falà, « Divine Ideas in the *Collationes oxonienses* » (p. 101–133), getta nuova luce sul dibattito filosofico-teologico delle *Collationes oxonienses*. Si tratta di « a composite work » (p. 101) che trasmette 26 questioni animate da studenti e regolate da baccellieri nel convento francescano di Oxford, risalente ai primi anni del 1300 e attribuibile solo in parte all'*auctoritas* di Scoto, in base a quanto emerso dalla recente edizione critica a cura di Guido Alliney e

Marina Fedeli.³ La difficoltà del testo è legata, da un lato, al genere letterario della *collatio* che si configura come esercizio di scuola volto a favorire capacità di dibattito e argomentazione e, dall'altro, al fatto che « from time to time themes, structure and even authors change » (p. 102). Ragioni che hanno spinto gli editori a dividere le questioni in quattro differenti gruppi, fino a interrogarsi sulla presenza autoritativa e sulla partecipazione di Scoto all'intero dibattito. Al Sottile dovrebbero infatti attribuirsi solo le prime undici *collationes* (primo gruppo), non però in veste di autore, risolutore o vincitore della disputa, bensì come portatore dell'opinione prevalente. Dopo aver passato in rassegna la varietà tematica del *corpus* (dalle relazioni trinitarie all'univocità dell'ente), Falà passa ad occuparsi delle questioni riguardanti la scienza divina e le idee divine (q. 3, 8–11), per poi soffermarsi più analiticamente sull'interpretazione delle q. 8–9. La *collatio* 8 (*Utrum in intellectione qua <deus> intelligit lapidem et asinum preexigantur respectus diversi et rationes diverse*) si concentra sul tipo di relazione conoscitiva che si instaura, passando per l'idea divina, tra Creatore e creatura; la *collatio* 9 (*Utrum hec divina essentia ut hec, distinta a seipsa, ut concipitur sub omni ratione attributali speciali, sit primum obiectum sui intellectus*) affronta invece il problema dello statuto ontologico delle idee divine rispetto al ruolo dell'essenza divina. Il paragrafo dedicato all'analisi della *collatio* 8 si compone di un'introduzione e di tre sottoparagrafi dedicati rispettivamente alla soluzione di Enrico, a quella di Scoto e al testo delle *Collationes*. Dalla maggior parte dei teologi del XIII secolo le idee divine – come già accennato in precedenza – sono considerate i criteri (*rationes cognoscendi*) con cui Dio conosce le cose diverse da sé (*alia a se*), in quanto relazioni di imitabilità (*respectus imitabilitatis*) tra le cose e l'essenza divina. Enrico è presentato come « one of the most mature interpreters of this same traditional doctrine » (p. 111). La sua dottrina delle idee divine prova ad immaginare una conoscenza davvero distinta delle creature, introducendo una distinzione tra *obiectum primum* (essenza) e *obiectum secundarium* (creatura) e aprendo alla possibilità di conoscere questo secondo oggetto, oltre che in quanto presente in Dio (*id quod ipsa est in Deo*), anche in quanto differente dalla sua essenza (*id quod ipsa habet esse in se ipsa, aliud a Deo*). Non si possono allora porre infinite idee cui corrispondono infiniti individui, ma un numero finito di idee cui corrisponde un numero finito di specie. Si giunge così alla soluzione di Scoto, in aperta opposizione con quella di Enrico: « God can know all things different from Himself through the direct awareness of His own essence » (p. 114); porre come necessario l'intervento delle idee vorrebbe dire per Scoto « svilire » (*vilesce*) l'intelletto divino. Diversamente da Noone e Vater, Falà sembra voler sottolineare l'aspetto rivoluzionario di questa teoria, in base al quale Scoto avrebbe favorito

³ IOHANNES DUNS SCOTUS, *Collationes oxonienses*, ed. GUIDO ALLINEY, MARINA FEDELI, SISMEL Edizioni del Galluzzo, Firenze 2016 (*Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi. Testi e studi*, 24).

« a decline of exemplarism as philosophical paradigm » (p. 114). Tuttavia, in linea con quanto esposto dai due studiosi americani, Falà spiega come il Dottor Sottile intenda, sì, privare le idee della loro funzione di *rationes cognoscendi*, ma sottolinea al tempo stesso come egli « does not reject in toto the traditional lexicon of ideas » (p. 117). Ne è prova il fatto che le conclusioni dei due contributi si allineano quasi perfettamente: « according to Scotus, relations of reason between God and intelligible object may in fact exist, but they have no gnoseological function in the dynamics of God's knowledge » (p. 118). Alla luce di questo quadro dottrinale risulta dunque più accessibile il dibattito della *collatio* 8, nel quale si fronteggiano verosimilmente lo stesso Scoto, nel ruolo di *opponens*, e un seguace dell'opinione di Enrico, nel ruolo di *respondens*. L'opinione del primo si rivela del tutto prevalente e non solo compatibile con quella del Dottor Sottile, ma anche affine (e in parte corrispondente, addirittura *verbatim*) all'impostazione fornita in almeno quattro argomenti impiegati nella *Lectura* e nell'*Ordinatio* (soprattutto I, d. 35-36). La posizione del *respondens* appare invece vicina alla dottrina di Enrico, ma esce dal dibattito piuttosto indebolita. La parte dedicata alla *collatio* 9 ripropone la struttura precedente. Si chiarisce dapprima che secondo la teoria tradizionale le idee godono di un *esse rationis* e non devono pertanto essere scambiate per essenze o quiddità. La teoria di Enrico sembra invece spingere verso una maggiore identificazione tra idee divine e essenze creaturali: le idee divine, come le umane, sono *entia diminuta* (in quanto non dotate di esistenza reale), mentre, diversamente dalle umane, in quanto pensieri contenuti *ab aeterno* nell'intelletto divino, godono non solo di un *esse rationis*, ma anche di un *esse essentiae*, e coincidono perciò con l'insieme degli enti possibili. Il passaggio all'esistenza si consuma invece tramite la volontà divina, che sceglie quali enti creare conferendo loro un *esse existentiae*. Scoto rigetta fermamente la dottrina enriciana, poiché – obietta – se l'idea avesse già un essere reale prima di essere creata, allora la creazione non sarebbe davvero *ex nihilo*, ma si ridurrebbe a una *alteratio* tra due tipologie diverse di essere. Egli rifiuta dunque la distinzione tra *esse essentiae* e *esse existentiae*, mentre mantiene il vocabolario dell'*esse diminutum*, l'unico essere da attribuire all'idea, costituita infatti da Dio in *esse intelligibili*. Lo statuto ontologico dell'idea, dunque, si esprime in un *esse cognitum*, *repraesentatum* o, come verrà chiamato più convintamente nella *Reportatio parisiensis* I-A, in un *esse obiectivum*: l'idea è realmente presente nella mente di Dio come oggetto di pensiero, pur senza configurarsi come soggetto sussistente (*esse subiectivum*). Giungendo dunque alla *collatio* 9, anche in essa si fronteggiano due studenti o baccellieri: l'uno, nel ruolo di *respondens*, sostiene che le idee abbiano un essere reale realmente distinto dall'essenza divina; l'altro, nel ruolo di *opponens*, risponde negativamente alla domanda ma senza fornire una sua opinione precisa sull'argomento. Per queste ragioni, come afferma Falà, « it is not easy to give an indisputable identity to the two discussants » (p. 129): dal punto di

vista del *respondens*, poiché egli difende una posizione inusuale che sembra corrispondere piuttosto alla « deformed exposition given by Scotus of Henry's doctrine » (p. 129) (l'*esse essentiae* viene letto come reale, mentre Enrico non sembra concepirlo mai in questi termini); dal punto di vista dell'*opponens*, poiché la sua posizione è, sì, compatibile con la dottrina espressa da Scoto in *Lectura* e *Ordinatio*, ma testimonia, da un lato, l'assenza del lessico più tardo dell'*esse obiectivum* e, dall'altro, l'assenza di una soluzione, controbilanciata da un netto rifiuto della posizione riferita (erroneamente) ad Enrico. È in questo senso dunque che l'analisi delle *Collationes oxonienses* può fornire informazioni preziose su « a crucial period in the formation of the Subtle Doctor » (p. 132), anche per ciò che concerne la sua dottrina delle idee divine. Nel convento di Oxford egli è costretto a confrontarsi con i seguaci della dottrina del maestro fiammingo, certamente preponderante in quell'epoca e in quel contesto. La *collatio* 9 permette altresì di intravedere l'evoluzione del pensiero di Scoto, ancora embrionale e cauto in questa prima formulazione e, dunque, ancora lontano dalla soluzione più matura della *Reportatio* imperniata sull'*esse obiectivum*.

Il contributo di Ernesto Dezza, « Giovanni Duns Scoto e gli *instantia naturae* » (p. 135–159), tenta di fornire un profilo analitico di uno « strumento ermeneutico polifunzionale » (p. 157): la teoria degli istanti di natura. Quest'ultima viene posta in connessione con un'altra teoria altrettanto innovativa, quella della contingenza sincronica (sulla quale molta letteratura è stata spesa), « pensata come uno stato di cose il cui opposto potrebbe darsi nel momento stesso in cui il mondo attuale si dà » (p. 138). Ciò comporta, com'è noto, una netta riconfigurazione del 'possibile' (tutto ciò che non implica contraddizione) e del 'volontario' (la libertà di scelta tra oggetti, atti e effetti opposti). Tra possibilità logica e possibilità reale si apre così lo spazio della contingenza dell'agire umano e divino. Ora, secondo Dezza la teoria degli istanti di natura deve collocarsi proprio all'interno di questo nuovo assetto « modale » basato sul *possibile logicum*, che « apre una prospettiva differente di articolare possibilità e tempo » (p. 143). Infatti, « ad un medesimo istante di tempo possono corrispondere più "istanti di natura" » (p. 144): vi è un'antiorità di certe operazioni o di certe facoltà rispetto ad altre, da intendere però non in senso temporale, bensì come « ordine della realtà [...] secondo l'importanza ontologica della cosa, tale per cui una perfezione non si può dare se prima non si dà l'altra » (p. 148). Si passano allora in rassegna i multiformi utilizzi di questo dispositivo – che Scoto riprende dai suoi predecessori, risemantizzandolo però in modo del tutto inedito – per arrivare poi al focus tematico del volume. Mentre nella versione della *Lectura* I, d. 43, q. un. non si fa (ancora) menzione degli istanti di natura per spiegare la possibilità di una cosa, nel luogo corrispettivo dell'*Ordinatio* essi vengono evocati: « per quanto concerne l'*esse cognitum* della cosa, essa è prodotta (1) come intelligibile da Dio in un primo istante di natura [...]; poi la cosa (2) viene considerata come essere

possibile in quanto da sé stessa non le ripugna l'essere. In un terzo istante (3), viene presentata alla volontà per essere voluta e creata » (p. 153). Al di là della problematicità di questo ordine metafisico, della maggiore o minore indipendenza della creatura da Dio (lo studioso sembra attestarsi su un'opinione intermedia) e della differente scansione proposta in *Ordinatio* I, d. 35, q. un. – (1) Dio conosce la sua essenza in quanto assoluta, (2) produce la cosa altra da sé *in esse intelligibile*, (3) confronta il suo intelletto con l'idea/cosa, istituendo con essa una relazione di ragione, (4) diviene consapevole della relazione stessa –, per Dezza resta chiaro che « la dottrina degli istanti di natura è il cardine attorno al quale si struttura l'analisi scotiana » (p. 154). Le differenti formulazioni non devono essere lette infatti come contraddizioni interne; piuttosto « l'impiego degli istanti di natura è funzionale alla prospettiva con la quale il Dottor Sottile affronta le diverse questioni » (p. 157). In questo senso, gli istanti di natura offrono a Scoto l'opportunità di spiegare « l'eterna decisione di Dio di produrre gli intelligibili e di sceglierli per attuarli nel mondo » (p. 159).

A questa sezione seguono numerosi approfondimenti dottrinali e testuali legati ad alcuni importanti esponenti del primo scotismo, fino ad arrivare alle formulazioni di Ockham e degli scotisti più tardi.

Marina Fedeli, in « Le idee divine e la relazione di imitabilità dell'essenza in Giacomo d'Ascoli » (p. 161–176), si sofferma su uno dei primi seguaci di Scoto a Parigi. Al di là della propensione del teologo marchigiano per l'opinione del suo maestro, la studiosa intende investigare soprattutto « il legame tra la dottrina delle idee e quella della relazione » (p. 163–164), concentrandosi sulle questioni 6, 7 e 8 del *Quodlibet* (tra le pochissime opere pervenute, risalente verosimilmente alla Quaresima del 1311). Dal punto di vista delle idee, Giacomo non nega né l'esemplarismo né l'imitabilità; tuttavia puntualizza che la relazione di imitabilità, in quanto *respectus rationis*, non fa parte della definizione formale di idea, ma è ad essa concomitante, poiché « nessun ente reale può divenire a imitazione di un *respectus* puramente razionale » (p. 165). In tal modo, come per Scoto, « il *respectus* [...] 'accompagna' l'idea divina ma non la costituisce » (p. 166). Che cos'è dunque l'idea per Giacomo? Essa, primariamente, è la stessa essenza divina considerata in senso assoluto; secondariamente, corrisponde alle varie essenze creaturali, nella misura in cui esse devono avere un'entità *alia a Deo*. I principali problemi si condensano proprio attorno alla natura di questa entità. Sintetizzando i molteplici passaggi argomentativi, si può affermare con Fedeli che per Giacomo le creature sin dall'eternità sussistono *objective* nell'essenza divina con un essere intenzionale (che le distingue le une dalle altre e dall'essenza stessa) e, 'dopo' essere state pensate come oggetti presenti nell'essenza, sono nell'intelletto divino con un essere di ragione. Pertanto, « l'oggetto della cognizione divina non ha un'esistenza materiale né è una pura essenza, ma possiede un'esistenza intelligibile, proprio come aveva detto Scoto » (p. 171–172).

Inoltre, il duplice *respectus* che lega Dio alla creatura realmente esistente (quello di imitabilità con l'essenza e quello di imitazione con il suo esemplare) sostiene certamente la creatura, ma non appartiene al suo concetto quidditativo. Dal punto di vista della relazione, Giacomo si allinea all'opinione del suo maestro: la relazione non è fondativa perché deve presupporre i termini della relazione stessa e perché, a differenza dell'opinione enriciana, « ha una realtà diversa da quella del fondamento » (p. 176). In questi aspetti si può notare quindi l'influsso della teoria della relazione su quella delle idee: proprio perché la relazione è sempre concomitante o successiva all'idea, « l'*esse ad aliud* non può entrare nella definizione formale dell'idea o della creatura » (p. 176).

Guglielmo di Alnwick (1275–1333), allievo e segretario di Scoto, formula una teoria in chiaro contrasto con quella di Giacomo e con quella del suo maestro, come sottolineato dal contributo di Davide Riserbato, « *Ut induit rationem ideae*. L'essenza divina e l'essere intelligibile: identità (e differenza) secondo Guglielmo di Alnwick » (p. 177–201). Il testo dal quale lo studioso trae il maggior numero di informazioni dottrinali (inserendo anche numerosi testi tradotti che arricchiscono la lettura) corrisponde alle *Quaestiones disputatae de esse intelligibili*: lo scopo della riflessione, raggiunto nell'ultima questione (q. 6), « consiste nel determinare lo statuto ontologico delle idee divine, dimostrando la tesi secondo cui l'essere intelligibile eterno che compete alla creatura in virtù dell'essenza divina (*esse intelligibile ab aeterno*) [...] non sia causato o prodotto » (p. 178). Riserbato si concentra però sulle q. 1–2 (soprattutto sulla seconda), « che rappresentano il fondamento teoretico dell'intera successiva argomentazione » (p. 180). Nella *quaestio* 1 Guglielmo presenta gli elementi principali della discussione e espone la sua teoria « dell'identità tra forma rappresentante o rappresentativa (*forma repraesentans*) e l'essere rappresentato (*esse repraesentatum*) dell'oggetto rappresentato » (p. 181), in opposizione alla soluzione di Giacomo d'Ascoli che – come abbiamo visto – attribuisce all'idea un essere intenzionale proprio, diverso dall'essenza divina, precedente all'attività conoscitiva dell'intelletto divino, né reale, né di ragione, ma intermedio tra questi. Ora, per Guglielmo questa soluzione corrisponde ad un nulla di fatto (*nulla est realitas media*). Inoltre, l'essere che Giacomo vorrebbe *obiectivum* secondo Guglielmo ha in realtà i caratteri di un essere *subiectivum* o *in effectum*, il che vorrebbe dire porre assurdamente ciascuna idea *ab aeterno* non solo in base alla sua natura (*secundum quidditatem*) ma anche secondo un'esistenza reale (*sed etiam secundum existentiam*). Pertanto, benché anche secondo Guglielmo l'essere rappresentato dell'oggetto sia *diminutum*, egli « non è tuttavia disposto a riconoscere che esso non sia reale e realmente identico all'essere della forma rappresentante » (p. 185), ovvero all'essenza divina, come chiarito nella *quaestio* 2. Per il maestro inglese, infatti, l'essere intelligibile eterno di una creatura non è possibile, ma necessario, cioè fondato nell'essere di Dio e, dunque, « intrinseco a

Dio e increato » (p. 193). In breve, esso coincide *realmente* con l'essenza divina. In questo senso, Alnwick ammette « che la creatura possa avere – anche se ovviamente solo in senso improprio (*denominative*) – anche un *esse intelligibile subiective ab aeterno*, nella misura in cui l'intellezione eterna di Dio ha come oggetto secondario anche l'essere intelligibile soggettivo della creatura » (p. 196). Essenza e idee rappresentano allora « un unico e medesimo essere intelligibile eterno, per quanto certamente l'intellezione abbia oggetti intelligibili distinti » (p. 197). Ecco dunque chiarita la preoccupazione speculativa di Alnwick: « l'attribuzione di una consistenza ontologica reale all'essere intelligibile », che Riserbato considera addirittura « più vicina alle intenzioni di Duns Scoto che non alla soluzione da lui effettivamente individuata mediante l'identificazione dell'essere intelligibile con un *esse diminutum* » (p. 201).

Chiara Paladini si confronta invece con la dottrina innovativa di un altro francescano 'ribelle', Pietro Aureolo (1280–1322), che cerca di limitare drasticamente l'intermediazione delle idee accordando un ruolo predominante all'essenza divina. Nel suo contributo dal titolo « Exemplar Causality as *similitudo aequivoca* in Peter Auriol » (p. 203–238), la studiosa espone dapprima le teorie di Tommaso e di Scoto, dalle quali l'Aureolo vuole dichiaratamente prendere le distanze. Ammettere le idee divine – come essi le hanno ammesse – significa per il teologo francese compromettere la semplicità divina: « it is impossible for creatures to exist in God as distinct from one another, whether as *relations of imitability*, as Aquinas held, or as *objects of knowledge*, as proposed by Scotus » (p. 211). In particolare, a Tommaso egli obietta (1) l'idea che Dio debba ricorrere a una *species intelligibilis* per conoscere la creatura e (2) che una moltiplicazione quandanche logica dell'essenza nelle varie idee « necessarily entails a kind of *real division of the divine essence* » (p. 213). Scoto, pur negando l'efficacia del *respectus imitabilitatis*, tuttavia compie secondo Pietro lo stesso errore di moltiplicare gli oggetti dell'intelletto divino, il che vuol dire porre comunque in Dio qualcosa di diverso da Dio stesso. Per Aureolo, al contrario, le creature non sono oggetto né primario né secondario, poiché la conoscenza di Dio non può che terminare nella sua stessa essenza: Dio conosce le creature « by means of a unique object, that is its own essence » (p. 215). Così, per andare oltre le soluzioni insoddisfacenti dei suoi predecessori, Aureolo passa – secondo Paladini – da una diversa concezione della conoscenza divina, fino ad approdare poi alla teoria della causalità esemplare come *similitudo aequivoca*. Il nuovo impianto gnoseologico stabilisce essenzialmente che la potenza intellettuale, in quanto attiva, può addirittura far apparire di fronte a sé i propri oggetti. Ogni conoscenza consta pertanto di due fattori: « an act of thought, through which an image (*similitudo*) of the object is produced, and the appearance of the object, to which the act of thought relates itself » (p. 216). Seguendo questa dinamica, l'intelletto divino si relaziona direttamente e *terminative* soltanto alla sua essenza,

ponendola in una *apparentia obiectiva*, mentre le creature possono essere conosciute solo indirettamente e *denominative*, come *denominationes* o *connotationes*, cioè come gli infiniti ‘modi’ dell’intelletto divino, che però conosce sempre un unico oggetto (come per Averroè, Dio conosce solo se stesso). Dio non ha dunque bisogno di alcun ‘intermediario ideale’: « By the mere fact that the simple *ratio* of Godhead ‘appears’ to God himself, the connoted creatures also *immediately* appear to him » (p. 222). Pertanto, nella misura in cui Dio, rapportandosi all’essenza come primo e unico *terminus* della sua conoscenza, conosce simultaneamente tutte le sue infinite connotazioni, costituisce « the exemplar cause of all specific natures » (p. 223). Come si spiega invece la conoscenza degli individuali? Se Dio nello specchio della deità vede/conosce se stesso, la pietra, l’uomo, la pianta, come conosce questa pietra, quest’uomo, questa pianta? Secondo Aureolo, come l’uomo conosce gli individuali non direttamente, ma aggiungendo al concetto astratto – attraverso un atto intenzionale immaginativo (*mediante imaginatione*) – un aspetto che lo individua nello spazio-tempo come *signatum*, così Dio può conoscere gli individuali « only in a mediated way » (p. 226). A differenza di Tommaso, pertanto, Dio può essere la *similitudo* diretta delle specie, ma non dei singolari. Diversamente dal funzionamento dell’intelletto umano, tuttavia, l’intelletto divino sfrutta una *signabilitas passiva* delle varie specie: « God knows the disposition or susceptibility of each specific quiddity to be exemplified by different individuals » (p. 229). In questo modo, « the divine essence turns out to be the only exemplar for the creation of both specific natures and individuals » (p. 230). Resta dunque da chiarire come possano sorgere molteplici specie e individui dalla conoscenza di un unico oggetto. Pietro ritiene che sia sufficiente « a single relationship of exemplarity: the one between the Godhead and the creatures, the *similitudo aequivoca* » (p. 231). Scegliere la via dell’*aequivocatio* tra Creatore e creatura vuol dire che, sebbene l’essenza divina sia causa esemplare del creato, non si deve necessariamente porre una somiglianza tra causa e effetto: « Auriol exemplarism [...] does not entail a direct correspondence between archetype and copy, since there can be no correspondence at all between the divine essence and creatures, based on somethings holding between idea and *ideatum* » (p. 233). L’esemplare stesso è equivoco, cioè « one that does not resemble the things for which it serves as exemplar » (p. 233). Non vi è dunque nessun modello preesistente, non vi sono idee eterne ispirandosi alle quali Dio crea il mondo, ma solo delle connotazioni, dei modi di intellesione che spiegano la molteplicità delle cose, senza però giocare alcun ruolo nella creazione.

Il contributo di William Duba, « From Scotus to the Platonici: Hugh of Novocastro, Landulph Caracciolo and Francis of Meyronnes » (p. 239–369), si immerge analiticamente nel dibattito interno alla scuola scotista sull'interpretazione della teoria delle idee divine proposta dal maestro, fornendone un profilo dottrinalmente esaustivo e filologicamente scrupoloso. Il capitolo è infatti corredato da tre appendici, contenenti edizioni critiche parziali di ciascuno degli autori trattati: l'*appendix A* (p. 283–300), curata da William Duba e Roberta Padlina, contiene l'edizione della d. 36, q. 4–6 del *Commento* al libro I delle *Sentenze* di Ugo di Novocastro (morto nel 1322), ricavata da tre manoscritti principali;⁴ l'*appendix B* (p. 301–341), curata da William Duba e Christopher Schabel, contiene l'edizione delle d. 35–36 del *Commento* di Landolfo Caracciolo (1280/1285 ca.–1351) allo stesso libro, sulla base del manoscritto principale (W), con l'ausilio di altri due testimoni (B e P);⁵ l'*appendix C* (p. 343–369), curata dallo stesso Duba, contiene infine l'edizione della d. 48 del *Commento* di Francesco di Meyronnes (1280 ca.–1328), sempre al libro I, basata sui due testimoni della redazione della *Summa simplicitas* o *Reportatio* (Ad e Pe) – relativa al periodo parigino – con il supporto dell'edizione a stampa del *Conflatus* (V),⁶ una versione notevolmente rimaneggiata e semplificata. Per Scoto – come abbiamo visto – le idee divine non sono relazioni eterne ma « objects of God's understanding [...] as cognized » (p. 245): esse hanno un ruolo secondario nella conoscenza di Dio, diversamente da Agostino, per il quale la conoscenza delle idee è invece indispensabile alla saggezza e alla beatitudine. Inoltre, il Sottile sembra lasciare aperti alcuni problemi, presi poi in carico dai suoi discepoli: la relazione tra essenza e idee, il fatto che le idee sono sia contenute nell'essenza che prodotte, il modo in cui esse fungono da esemplari. Come può infatti ciò che è oggetto dell'intelletto divino (cioè l'idea secondo Scoto) fungere da modello per la produzione delle creature? Nel testo in appendice Ugo di Novocastro tenta di difendere l'esemplarismo scotiano dalle critiche di un'intramontabile tradizione bonaventuriana – secondo la quale le idee sono *rationes cognoscendi*, realmente identiche e razionalmente diverse rispetto all'essenza divina –, imboccando però una strada leggermente diversa. Egli sostiene che « the production into intelligible being is not truly a production, since the intelligible beings so produced are just being of reason, entailing non distinction in reality in the divine essence » (p. 249). L'essenza divina, così, contiene virtualmente e

⁴ F = Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 30 dext. 2, fol. 71vb–73va; G = Gdansk, Polska Akademia Nauk Biblioteka Gdańska, 1969, fol. 56rb–57rb; X = Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Lat. 15864, fol. 46va–47va.

⁵ B = Bologna, Biblioteca del Collegio di Spagna, MS 46; P = Padova, Biblioteca Antoniana, MS 166 scaff. IX; W = Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 1496.

⁶ Ad = Admont, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 91, fol. 76rb–77vb; Pe = Pelplin, Biblioteka Seminarium Duchownego, Rkps. 53/102, fol. 194rb–196vb; V = *Conflatus*, d. 47, ed. Venetiis 1520.

eminentemente le idee/creature come oggetti conosciuti ‘oggettivamente’ « as they in some way exist in the mind of God » (p. 250). Egli specifica inoltre che l’idea è *forma intellectualis exemplaris*, in quanto causa finale (esemplare), non efficiente, della creazione della realtà extramentale. In base a questi chiarimenti il maestro francescano può dunque dimostrare che le idee esistono come enti intelligibili (q. 4), che sono – come per Scoto – oggetti conosciuti dall’eternità (q. 5) e che vi sono idee divine di individuali, relazioni, generi e differenze specifiche (q. 6). Anche Landolfo Caracciolo, rispondendo alle obiezioni di Pietro Aureolo – per il quale le idee divine sono denominazioni o connotazioni dell’unica essenza divina, in base ad una relazione di *similitudo* –, si schiera dalla parte del maestro scozzese, difendendo la distinzione formale tra le idee e enfatizzando il ruolo delle idee nella contingenza della creazione volontaria. Dal punto di vista del loro statuto (d. 35), Caracciolo sostiene che le idee sono, come per Ugo, « objectively in God as the second objects of God’s cognition », ma specifica più convintamente che lo sono in quanto « eminently contained by the divine essence » (p. 257). Dal punto di vista della creazione (d. 36), egli afferma inoltre che le idee divine « are the objects of creation as present to the divine mind, logically posterior to God’s understanding of the divine essence and prior to God’s creation of those objects » (p. 262). Esse sono in tal senso gli esemplari (pensati) delle cose creabili dalla volontà divina. Francesco di Meyronnes, al contrario, dopo aver sostenuto in un primo tempo la dottrina del maestro, se ne discosta durante il suo insegnamento parigino, come testimoniato dal testo in appendice. Egli introduce una distinzione tra il modo in cui i Padri hanno inteso le idee divine e il significato accordato loro dai Filosofi: per i primi esse sono esemplari, per i secondi universali. Meyronnes arriva così ad adottare, oltre all’autorità di Agostino, anche « the philosophical discussion of ideas found in Avicenna and Plato, according to which ideas are quiddities [...], the formal descriptions of things in abstraction from their instantiations » (p. 265). Più precisamente, Francesco trae da Agostino che le idee sono esemplari contenuti formalmente nella mente divina e eminentemente nell’essenza divina; da Avicenna che esse sono quiddità; da Platone che esse sono definizioni formali, forme delle cose. Pertanto, schierandosi a sostegno di una teoria delle idee fatta risalire a Platone (contro Aristotele, *pessimus metaphysicus*) – teoria non verificata però nei testi, facendo parte di coloro « who cite Plato without having read him » (p. 243) – « Meyronnes rejects Scotus for not being Augustinian enough, links philosophical ideas to doctrines of universals, and determines that such ideas are neither real nor mental beings, but undergird both » (p. 243). Nella versione più tarda del *Conflatus*, il filosofo francescano addirittura « becomes something of a double Platonist on ideas: in the theological sense, he subscribes to Augustine’s doctrine, which itself is based on Plato, “speaking as a theologian”; for the metaphysical

sense, he holds a position on universals as prior to real or mental existence, and credits this view to Plato » (p. 277).

La vivacità e la varietà del dibattito nella scuola minorita sono confermate dalla posizione di Pietro di Tommaso (morto nel 1339/40 ca.), come testimoniato dal contributo di Garrett Smith, « Petrus Thomae on Divine Ideas and Intelligible Being » (p. 371–399). Il maestro francescano sviluppa la sua teoria in stretto dialogo con quella di Scoto, di cui condivide i principali capisaldi: l'idea come *creatura intellecta*, i quattro istanti di natura, la secondarietà della relazione, la distinzione formale, le idee *unitive contentae*, oggetti secondi dell'intellezione divina, l'essere oggettivo. Non a caso « Petrus Thomae's *Reportatio* is a *compilatio* of Duns Scotus's *Ordinatio* », ragione per la quale, « the primary source for determining his position on the divine ideas [...] is his *Quaestiones de esse intelligibili* » (p. 372), un testo ricco di riferimenti filosofici e teologici che ha come oggetto lo statuto dell'idea in quanto ente intelligibile. Egli non manca di introdurre qui alcune importanti novità, soprattutto circa l'origine delle idee. Infatti, rispetto all'esigenza di armonizzazione tra stabilità dei principi (Agostino) e produzione delle idee (Scoto), « Peter denies Scotus's claim that divine intellect produces them » (p. 377). Della dottrina scotiana egli mantiene tuttavia il fatto che « the divine essence contains the quiddities of creatures » (p. 381). Pietro cerca così di attutire le possibili ambiguità della dottrina scotiana (analogamente a Ugo di Novocastro), « by reinterpreting [...] the claim that the divine intellect produces the creatable quiddities » (p. 382). Più radicalmente, Pietro afferma però che « the divine intellect does not produce the quiddities of creatures, but rather the divine essence contains them in a special mode of containment and displays them in an ideal mirror-world to the divine intellect » (p. 383). Dunque, l'essenza divina garantisce alle essenze creaturali la loro intelligibilità, ontologicamente precedente a ogni intelletto che la pensi (anche all'intelletto divino) e alle stesse nozioni di 'possibile' o 'creabile'. In tal senso, « the essences of the creatables [...] are in divine essence, but they are not caused by it » (p. 385): un'idea divina non è altro che uno dei riflessi che emanano dallo 'specchio' dell'essenza divina. Inoltre, dal punto di vista del loro statuto ontologico, secondo Pietro le idee – non diversamente da Scoto – godono di un essere reale, vero ed eterno, distinto dall'essere divino: l'essere del riflesso (idea) è diverso da quello dello specchio (essenza). Ora, il fatto che le idee hanno un'esistenza reale eterna e che sono diverse dall'essere di Dio « conflicts with the Christian doctrine of creation, according to which there is a production from non-being to being » (p. 391). Il filosofo francescano esce dall'imbarazzo provando a tenere insieme le due cose in una complessa teoria. Da una parte troviamo una « nientità » (*nihileitas*) di non-ripugnanza – intesa come negazione dell'*aliquitas*, ovvero come « a negation of cause not exercising its power by causing something in actual existence » (p. 396) – che caratterizza le essenze: non vi è materiale preesistente,

ma una disposizione all'essere delle cose creabili, che affonda le sue radici nella *nihileitas* da cui esse provengono. Dall'altra parte si introduce invece la differenza/relazione tra *esse obiectivum* della creatura e *esse subiectivum* di Dio: « while creatures do not have subjective being, nonetheless they still have real being *ab aeterno* because they are object of the divine intellect and are presented to the divine intellect by the divine essence » (p. 396). Ma se vi è una distinzione formale tra *esse repraesentatum* e *esse repraesentativum*, allora – nota Smith – « it would seem that Peter is in danger of positing a plurality of eternal real beings after all » (p. 396); tuttavia, attraverso la similitudine dello specchio il filosofo francescano sembra riuscire a spiegare in che modo vi sia una pluralità di enti intelligibili eterni e dotati di un *esse obiectivum*. Le idee, quindi, in quanto essenze o quiddità delle cose creabili, sono dotate secondo Pietro di un alto grado di 'realtà', non però nel senso di un'esistenza attuale, ma nel senso di un oggetto indipendente da e precedente a ogni atto dell'intelletto (in termini tanto platonici quanto scotiani).

Ad Alessandro Ghisalberti è affidato il compito di indagare « Le idee divine in Guglielmo d'Ockham » (p. 401–426). Lo studioso chiarisce innanzitutto che in Ockham (1285–1347), alla luce della ridefinizione dei limiti della teologia naturale – capace di dimostrare l'esistenza di una prima causa ma non i suoi attributi e le sue operazioni –, « anche l'interrogativo circa la conoscenza propria di Dio e delle idee di Dio in relazione alle creature, in partenza si avvale dei dati accolti come verità certe dalla rivelazione » (p. 402). Anche in questo caso, la dottrina è condensata nella d. 35 del libro I del *Commento alle Sentenze*. Uno degli obiettivi polemici del filosofo inglese sembra essere la teoria dei quattro istanti di natura avanzata da Scoto (e ampiamente esposta nei precedenti articoli). Dal punto di vista metodologico, il *modus loquendi* del Sottile gli risulta *falsus vel nimis abusivus*. Egli inoltre non ammette una distinzione tra conoscenza primaria (dell'essenza) e conoscenza secondaria (della pietra), ma suppone piuttosto un unico istante, « un unico atto conoscitivo del tutto indistinto » (p. 407) nel quale Dio conosce sia la propria essenza sia le creature. Rispetto poi allo statuto dell'idea divina (q. 5), il *Venerabilis Inceptor* nega che essa possa avere una definizione quidditativa, poiché « non possiede un contenuto significativo autonomo » (p. 408); essa non è neanche una relazione (né reale né di ragione), « sia perché la relazione non può essere l'esemplare di qualche creatura, sia perché nessun ente di ragione può essere l'esemplare di un ente reale » (p. 409). Ecco allora emergere la soluzione del teologo francescano: l'idea è la creatura stessa (*ipsa creatura est idea*), nella misura in cui essa è pre-conosciuta da un principio intellettuale attivo che la pone nell'essere reale in modo razionale. Pertanto, « le idee in Dio non sono da porre come degli esemplari esistenti realmente nell'intelletto divino, [...] ma si collocano in Dio solamente *objective*, come delle entità da lui conosciute, dal momento che le idee coincidono con le cose stesse producibili da Dio » (p. 412):

ideae sunt ipsamet cognita a Deo, alia ab eo. Si giunge così ad un punto di svolta nella storia dell'esemplarismo: la creazione non è la realizzazione necessaria degli esemplari, ma l'espressione della radicale contingenza della natura e della irriducibile singolarità degli individui che emerge dall'incontro tra « il primato dell'individuo » e « l'Assoluto divino, onnipotente creatore di ogni elemento », frutto dell'« imperscrutabile atto di libertà con cui il creatore ha fatto sorgere il mondo » (p. 415). In tal modo, « Ockham libera l'agire del creatore dai vincoli di un ordine precedente alla creazione », portando « a maturazione il percorso della dottrina della possibilità che stava alla base della teoria delle idee divine elaborata da Duns Scoto per salvaguardare la libertà assoluta del Dio creatore » (p. 419–420). Secondo Ghisalberti, dunque, proprio in questo passaggio consiste la *novitas* introdotta dal teologo inglese nella scuola francescana tra XIII e XIV secolo.

Se Ockham sembra aver oramai smantellato l'impianto gnoseologico-ontologico che sorregge la dottrina delle idee divine (sulla base dell'opaca intelligibilità dell'ordine stabilito da Dio), un autore come Giovanni da Ripa – *Doctor Supersubtilis*, tardivo seguace di Scoto – cerca invece di restare ancorato alla tradizione dell'esemplarismo, come mostrato dal contributo di Andrea Nannini, « *Immensa exemplaritas*. La dottrina delle idee nella metafisica di Giovanni da Ripa. I *Sent.*, d. 35 » (p. 427–459). Alla luce dell'analisi dell'inedita *distinctio* della *Lectura*, secondo Ripa le idee divine sono perfezioni (*denominationes perfectionis*, cioè manifestazioni dell'unica perfezione divina), « “ragioni essenziali e essenzialmente distintive” delle diverse realtà » (p. 428) che condividono una comune origine: l'essenza divina. Quest'ultima « le contiene in modo eminente e non formale » (p. 429), secondo la linea dettata da Scoto. Dio deve dunque contenere « *eminenter* la molteplicità degli enti » (p. 430): ogni *perfectio* si distingue formalmente in base alla sua *ratio essentialis*, ovvero in base al suo modo specifico di replicare la perfezione divina (*replicatio unitatis divinae*). Seguendo l'adagio di Sap. 11:21 (*omnia in numero et pondere et mensura disposuisti*), Ripa ritiene che tutte le specie delle creature godano di una propria unità numerica, in base ad una gerarchia che arriva fino alle perfezioni individuali. In ogni livello (coordinate trascendentali, idee/essenze/specie, individui) si ha una diversa *replicatio*: « tutte le cose che nel mondo creato trovano una distinzione essenziale di qualche tipo, devono essere ricondotte ad una previa distinzione nella causa prima che ne rappresenta l'origine sorgiva » (p. 437), ovvero ad una pluralità di *rationes exemplares* in Dio. La semplicità non è tuttavia compromessa, perché « la *continentia eminens* dell'essenza divina si esprime [...] nell'eterna possibilità di produrre effetti [...] modellati sulla natura stessa delle sue immense perfezioni » (p. 443): in questo senso l'*immensa essentia* di Dio incontra l'*immensa exemplaritas* delle infinite essenze/creature. Ripa, pertanto, cerca di « “attenuare” la magmatica *immensitas* divina evitando un'esemplarità “diretta” che renderebbe

immensa qualsiasi creatura [...] tramite la mediazione di una dimensione latitudinario-analogica tra l'*immensitas* puntiforme di Dio e la creatura che partecipa di una o più perfezioni divine » (p. 450). Il francescano marchigiano sembra così indietreggiare rispetto a Scoto, reintroducendo « l'analogia tra Dio e il creato » e restringendo « l'univocità al solo dominio delle *latitudines entium* » (p. 451), nella misura in cui Dio non può esemplare una perfezione a lui univoca. Egli si smarca dal Sottile altresì per quanto riguarda la produzione (analogamente agli altri scotisti trattati nel volume); per Giovanni è vero piuttosto che « le idee sono causa della conoscibilità divina delle creature » (p. 453). Infine, secondo Ripa le idee non sono *entia deminuta*, ma « derivazione diretta dalle corrispondenti perfezioni divine immense »; più radicalmente, egli afferma che « le perfezioni essenziali esemplanti non sono altro che la stessa essenza divina » (p. 457). Resta dunque centrale « il processo che (1) dalle perfezioni divine originarie conduce (2) alle perfezioni divine esemplari [...] e solo poi (3) alle creature vere e proprie » (p. 458).

L'ultimo contributo di Alessandro D. Conti, « Late Medieval Exemplarism: a Philosophical Assessment » (p. 461-487), si propone infine di offrire una panoramica sintetica (ma non per questo meno scrupolosa) delle principali tesi presentate nel volume, secondo una prospettiva sia storiografica che filosofica. Lo studioso ricostruisce le radici della questione a partire dalla dottrina di Agostino e ne individua alcuni « knotty problems » (p. 463): (1) il *gap* tra le infinite idee divine e i finiti enti creati; (2) la conoscenza indiretta degli individui da parte del Dio onnisciente e provvidente; (3) la difficile conciliazione tra la molteplicità delle idee e l'assoluta semplicità divina; (4) la differenza tra 'cose' e 'idee'; (5) il problema dell'esistenza *in re* delle idee/essenze come universali; (6) lo statuto dell'idea *in mente Dei*. Conti si domanda poi quali siano i « logico-metaphysical tools » maggiormente utilizzati nelle dottrine tardo medievali: « the notions of identity and distinction (or difference) play a crucial role here » (p. 467). Un primo gruppo di autori (i maestri anteriori a Scoto, Ockham, Burley, ecc.) fa uso di categorie tradizionali come identità reale, distinzione reale o distinzione di ragione: le idee o sono identiche all'essenza divina o sono da essa diverse. In questo senso – commenta Conti – « it is very hard to justify how it is possible that there is a plurality of (different) ideas in God » (p. 468). Un secondo gruppo di autori (Enrico di Gand, Duns Scoto, la maggior parte degli scotisti, ecc.) ricorre invece a concetti più sfumati e intermedi come la distinzione intenzionale o la distinzione formale. All'interno di questo quadro non bisogna trascurare la teoria di Tommaso d'Aquino e di altri autori non francescani (come ad esempio Egidio Romano). L'Aquinata in particolare, distinguendo i due ruoli dell'idea divina, ad un tempo principio conoscitivo (*ratio*) e principio pratico (*exemplar*), rappresenta un vero « point of departure » e « an excellent reference » « at the beginning of the complex history of the theories of exemplarism in the late

Middle Ages » (p. 470–471). La sua soluzione presenta certamente alcuni limiti, in particolare la concezione degli individuali e l'inadeguatezza dei dispositivi logici adottati (distinzione di realtà e di ragione). Si sottolinea allora l'innovazione apportata da Scoto all'interno del dibattito (di cui si è già fornito un ampio resoconto), in discontinuità con la tradizione precedente: « the possibles are present (*qua* ideas) in God's mind because He thinks of them » (p. 476). Conti sottolinea soprattutto il nuovo approccio metafisico, la distinzione formale, il rifiuto dell'identificazione tra idea e *ratio intelligendi*, i quattro istanti di natura, la secondarietà della relazione di imitabilità, la dignità degli individuali (dotati anch'essi di un'idea), l'idea come oggetto secondario dell'intellezione divina, l'*esse obiectivum*. Lo studioso non manca tuttavia di sottolineare le debolezze e le ambiguità della posizione scotiana circa la relazione tra essenza e idee (come notato dai suoi stessi allievi). Per questa ragione, l'eredità di Scoto appare quantomeno controversa: al di là di Giacomo d'Ascoli, Pietro di Tommaso, Landolfo Caracciolo e – con un approccio più critico – Francesco di Meyronnes, tutti gli altri maestri sembrano attaccare il Sottile (Guglielmo di Alnwick, Pietro Aureolo e Giovanni da Ripa). La rottura del modello dell'esemplarismo si verifica invece con Guglielmo d'Ockham, che non ritiene fondato il collegamento tra specie intelligibili e conoscenza umana, così come l'identificazione tra idee e essenza divina o la loro distinzione formale: per Ockham « divine ideas are the creatures themselves *qua* known by God as pure possibles » (p. 479), e il mondo creato è « a mere collection of individuals » (p. 481). In conclusione, i tentativi in seno al pensiero francescano di trovare un'armonia tra dottrina cristiana, autorità agostiniana, ispirazione neoplatonica e metodologia aristotelica vengono ricondotti a tre approcci principali: (1) autori come Tommaso d'Aquino, Egidio Romano, Alessandro di Hales, Giovanni di La Rochelle, Bonaventura da Bagnoregio e Pietro di Giovanni Olivi sembrano difendere una versione più 'ortodossa' della dottrina sulle idee divine, incurante del contributo aristotelico e fedele alla fonte agostiniana, non priva però di qualche *misinterpretation*; (2) autori come Giacomo d'Ascoli, Pietro Aureolo e Pietro di Tommaso cercano – in modi diversi – di collocare la dottrina dentro un orizzonte filosofico più ampio; (3) autori del calibro di Giovanni Duns Scoto e Guglielmo d'Ockham sembrano invece spiccare sugli altri nella misura in cui riescono a sviluppare paradigmi filosofici nuovi, che illuminano, pur seguendo modi e metodi radicalmente diversi, i contenuti della fede. Così, tirando le fila dei considerevoli risultati del volume, Conti si mostra profondamente convinto che esso possa stimolare « a critical rethink of » « two crucial problems of medieval theology, *i.e.* God's knowledge of the world and its creation » (p. 482).

Per chiunque voglia accostarsi al problema storico-filosofico dell'intelligibilità del mondo e dei modelli esemplari che lo innervano, il volume di Falà e Zavattero dedicato alle dottrine dell'esemplarismo tra XIII e XIV secolo rappresenta

pertanto uno strumento irrinunciabile (e autorevole) di approfondimento e di indagine. Esso fornisce una fotografia esaustiva e puntuale di un dibattito arduo e vivace, senza cadere però nella tentazione di una ricostruzione eccessivamente sintetica e monolitica, che misconosca la complessità e l'evoluzione del pensiero francescano. Un pensiero fiorente, certamente riconducibile ad alcuni *topoi* comuni, ma animato soprattutto da una irriducibile pluralità di voci, spesso anche aspramente contrapposte tra loro.

OUTI MERISALO, MIIKA KUHA, SUSANNA NIIRANEN (EDS.), *TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES AND THE RENAISSANCE*, BREPOLS, TURNHOUT 2019 (BIBLIOLOGIA 53. ELEMENTA AD LIBRORUM STUDIA PERTINENTIA), 239 PP., 19 COLOUR ILL., ISBN 9782503581569.

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L'ultimo titolo, il cinquantatreesimo, apparso nella serie di Brepols *Bibliologia: Elementa ad librorum studia pertinentia*, è una raccolta di studi sulla trasmissione del sapere nel basso Medioevo e nel Rinascimento curata da Outi Merisalo, Miika Kuha e Susanna Niiranen. Il volume, pur trattando *latu sensu* un tema di storia della cultura, trova posto nella suddetta collana perché rivolge lo sguardo agli aspetti materiali della trasmissione culturale, assumendo come oggetto di studio il libro in quanto veicolo privilegiato del sapere. La prospettiva di ricerca, che accomuna i quattordici contributi che compongono il volume, considera i testi a partire dalle loro condizioni materiali di trasmissione. L'intento è quello di sottolineare come la storia della trasmissione del sapere sia anche necessariamente storia del libro, dal momento che la forma in cui testi si presentano ai lettori in una data epoca influenza e veicola la ricezione degli stessi; in particolare, nei casi di studio trattati, l'arco cronologico considerato va dal XIII al XVI secolo.

Il cammino della ricerca prende le mosse dal progetto *Tralmar* – per iniziativa di Lorenzo Amato, Joëlle Ducos, Miika Kuha, Jakub Kujawinski, Outi Merisalo e Samu Niskanen e finanziato dall'*Academy of Finland* e dall'Università di Jyväskylä (2013–2017) –¹ che intendeva a sua volta perseguire e sviluppare l'approccio metodologico già adottato da alcuni membri del team (Amato, Merisalo e Niskanen) nell'ambito di un progetto affine, anch'esso finanziato dall'*Academy: BIT. Books in Transition* (2008–2011).² I lavori di *Tralmar* si innestano, dunque, negli itinerari inaugurati dal progetto precedente, allargandone la prospettiva di studio dall'identificazione del ruolo del libro nella diffusione di nuove idee su un piano individuale, al riconoscimento del grado di influenza dell'oggetto-libro nel più ampio processo di trasmissione del sapere.

¹ <<https://staff.jyu.fi/Members/merisalo/Transmission>> (ultima consultazione 20/01/2020).

² <<https://staff.jyu.fi/Members/merisalo/books>> (ultima consultazione 20/01/2020).

In una prima fase, il progetto *Tralmar* è stato strutturato in cinque ambiti di ricerca, legati alle diverse sfere di interesse proprie dei membri del team: storiografia, epistolografia, letteratura medica, letteratura militare e poesia. Sono numerose le pubblicazioni che rendono conto degli avanzamenti e dei risultati di ciascun percorso di ricerca,³ alle quali fa eco un calendario ricco di occasioni di confronto che hanno coinvolto anche studiosi esterni al progetto.⁴

Il volume qui recensito è una riproposta, con le dovute revisioni e arricchimenti, degli interventi succedutisi in occasione del convegno di chiusura del progetto *Tralmar*, che si è svolto presso la *Danish Academy* a Roma nel luglio 2017,⁵ e vede un significativo coinvolgimento di altri studiosi e un ampliamento a nuovi ambiti di ricerca. Le relazioni si raggruppano, quindi, secondo sei aree disciplinari, in parte diverse da quelle previste in partenza – sebbene la ripartizione interna fra le stesse sia talvolta ineguale: diritto romano, letteratura medica, letteratura religiosa, storiografia, letteratura militare, poesia.

Dopo l'introduzione da parte di uno dei curatori del volume, nonché membro fondatore dell'iniziativa *Tralmar*, Outi Merisalo, che fa il sunto degli avanzamenti del progetto di ricerca ed evidenzia i tratti comuni dei vari studi ivi pubblicati, la raccolta si apre con il contributo di Mario Varvaro, la sola nell'ambito del diritto romano. Lo studioso restituisce una definizione più esatta della *possessio* alla luce degli aspetti codicologici del cosiddetto *Codex Farnesianus*, unico testimone del *De verborum significatu* di Sesto Pompeo Festo. Il caso di studio offre l'occasione per sottolineare l'importanza di rivolgere l'attenzione alle fonti manoscritte, dal momento che le primissime edizioni stampate rappresentano esse stesse un filtro alla trasmissione del testo, che « può distorcere talora i dati provenienti dalla tradizione manoscritta in modo da condizionare in negativo l'esercizio della critica testuale ».⁶ In particolare, e in linea con le prospettive di ricerca del progetto *Tralmar*, l'orientamento filologico rivolto specificamente all'analisi della tradizione manoscritta consente il recupero di informazioni riguardanti il testo legate alla forma materiale in cui quest'ultimo è stato trasmesso.

La sezione dedicata alla letteratura medica ospita quattro saggi che trattano il tema generale della diffusione del pensiero medico in momenti storici anche significativamente distanti tra loro (compresi in un arco temporale che va dall'XI al XV secolo), secondo un comune approccio metodologico incentrato, anche in

³ <<https://staff.jyu.fi/Members/merisalo/Tralmar%20publications>> (ultima consultazione 20/01/2020).

⁴ <<https://staff.jyu.fi/Members/merisalo/Tralmar2013-2017>> (ultima consultazione 20/01/2020).

⁵ <<https://staff.jyu.fi/Members/merisalo/transmission-of-knowledge-in-the-late-middle-ages-and-the-renaissance-programme-version-100417-2.pdf>> (ultima consultazione 20/01/2020).

⁶ MARIO VARVARO, « Note sulla definizione della *possessio* nel Festo farnesiano (Napoli, BNN, IV. A. 3) », p. 29.

questo caso, sull'attenta revisione della tradizione e dei processi di trasmissione testuale.

Stefania Fortuna, in particolare, ristabilisce la paternità del *De farmaciis*, generalmente riferito tra le opere galeniche o pseudo-galeniche, attribuendolo a Bartolomeo da Messina, attivo alla corte di Manfredi di Sicilia, o a un altro membro dell'*entourage* del sovrano, sulla base dello stile, della tradizione e della ricezione del testo e ne offre un'edizione critica basata su tre testimonianze manoscritte risalenti al XIV secolo. Le questioni attributive sono affrontate a partire dallo stile della traduzione (dall'originale greco), ma si rivela fondamentale e decisiva soprattutto la ricostruzione delle dinamiche di ricezione del testo e delle relazioni tra i testimoni che lo tramandano.

Il recupero della tradizione manoscritta è ugualmente al centro dell'articolo di Monica H. Green, che ripercorre il lavoro di costruzione del testo a monte dell'*editio princeps* dell'*Harmonia Gynaeciorum*. Il percorso filologico a ritroso compiuto dalla studiosa risale fino alle operazioni di selezione e di filtraggio che i testi oggetto di studio hanno subito nel corso di più epoche: ciò ha permesso di definire meglio alcune fasi del processo di ricezione, trasmissione e trasformazione del pensiero medico dalla tarda antichità al Rinascimento, rilevando, in particolare, una fase di recupero degli scritti di medicina tardo-antichi nel corso dell'XI secolo.

Le riflessioni di Iolanda Ventura sugli scritti di Giovanni di Saint-Amand sottolineano, d'altro canto, la necessità di considerare i processi di trasmissione dei testi in funzione del lavoro ecdotico e di critica del testo. Per la studiosa, nella definizione del *corpus* di scritti dell'autore, al lavoro di attribuzione e di riordino della tradizione manoscritta va aggiunta una più interessante analisi dei problemi di trasmissione e ricezione di tale tradizione, « fase preliminare della *recensio operum et codicum* ».⁷ Tali approcci metodologici aprono la strada ad approfondimenti sull'evoluzione delle pratiche di lettura e di utilizzo dei testi, portando gli studiosi a considerarne i processi di trasmissione: nello specifico, il caso degli scritti di Giovanni di Saint-Amand offre uno spaccato sulla cultura universitaria medica a Parigi tra la fine del XIII e il XIV secolo.

Il contributo di Vivian Nutton, che chiude la sezione medica, discute una delle questioni centrali e ricorrenti nel progetto *Tralmar*, ossia il modo in cui il passaggio dal manoscritto al libro a stampa abbia influenzato la ricezione dei testi. In particolare, Nutton riconosce una lacuna nella trasmissione delle opere di letteratura medica coincidente con il XV secolo, legata a una mancata fase di coesistenza di fonti manoscritte medievali con le primissime edizioni a stampa. Prima che fossero recuperati ed editi i testi di epoca classica, cosa che non

⁷ IOLANDA VENTURA, « Una trasmissione complessa da rivedere. Appunti sul *corpus* di scritti di Giovanni di Saint-Amand », p. 57.

avvenne prima del 1520, gli stampatori si limitarono a produrre piccoli manuali di contenuto medico rivolti a non specialisti, mentre la letteratura medica continuò ad essere relegata ai manoscritti di studio medievali, prodotti nei circoscritti ambienti delle università, salvo pochissime edizioni stampate, esclusivamente italiane.

La terza sezione del volume è dedicata alla letteratura religiosa – una delle tematiche non originariamente previste dal progetto – e accoglie un saggio di Elena Parina e Maria Volkonskaya, nel quale le due studiose prendono in esame un peculiare e sovente trascurato aspetto della trasmissione manoscritta: la coesistenza di testi diversi e la loro reciproca distribuzione all'interno dell'unità codicologica che li trasmette e le relazioni di quest'ultima con altri testimoni dei testi in analisi. L'oggetto dello studio è costituito in particolare da scritti della religione popolare galles vicini al genere dei *merita missae* e concerne la loro diffusione nello stesso Galles e nel contesto europeo. Questo contributo ha soprattutto il merito di sottolineare l'importanza, dal punto di vista metodologico, di allargare lo sguardo all'unità codicologica nel suo insieme che trasmette un testo insieme ad una pluralità di altri testi, della quale è opportuno considerare l'impianto distributivo in relazione a quello degli altri testimoni della tradizione.

Il capitolo concernente gli studi di ambito storiografico è il più corposo del volume e, su cinque contributi, tre sono firmati da studiosi facenti parte del nucleo primigenio di *Tralmar*. Ancora una volta gli esempi trattati costituiscono il campo di prova di metodologie di ricerca estendibili a nuovi casi di studio. Nel lavoro preparatorio per l'*editio princeps* della *Peregrinatio Antiochie per Vrbanum papam facta*, Samu Niskanen mette a punto strategie di edizione utili per lo studio critico di testi nella cui tradizione manoscritta un ruolo importante è giocato dagli interventi di copisti-redattori: « the textual critic must distinguish between various layers of text, ranging from what is the authorial voice to what is deliberate revision and what is inadvertent noise by manuscript transmission ».⁸

La tematica della traduzione, pur presente in alcuni degli altri interventi del volume, è centrale nel lavoro di Jakub Kujawinski, dedicato ad alcune versioni in medio francese di cinque cronache latine trasmesse dal manoscritto parigino fr. 688 della Bibliothèque Nationale de France: ricerche sulla diffusione e trasmissione dei testi non possono, infatti, prescindere dallo studio delle eventuali traduzioni degli stessi, anche perché queste ultime possono costituire importanti sedi di trasformazione testuale. Con un'inversione di prospettiva, lo studioso propone di guardare alle traduzioni di un testo per portare alla luce

⁸ SAMU NISKANEN, « Copyists and redactors. Towards a prolegomenon to the *editio princeps* of *Peregrinatio Antiochie per Vrbanum papam facta* », p. 108.

aspetti del testo originario non reperibili a partire dalla sua propria tradizione o, nei casi più estremi, per sopperire alla mancata trasmissione di quest'ultima.

Nel saggio di Concetta Bianca, l'analisi dei due testimoni del *De expeditione in Turcos* di Biondo Flavio (Città del Vaticano, BAV, Vat. Lat. 1946 e Genova, BUG, 322) si presenta come un'occasione per riaffermare il principio *recentiores non deteriores*: il manoscritto genovese, il più recente appunto, reca un testo più vicino alla versione originaria del Biondo. Il contributo, comunque, è significativo soprattutto per un altro aspetto: il Vaticano Latino, sottoposto a un'analisi volta a distinguere tra la voce dell'autore e altri eventuali interventi esterni sul testo, si rivela infatti molto interessante per le sue modalità di trasmissione. Nonostante la produzione del manoscritto sia molto vicina cronologicamente al momento di composizione dell'opera, gli interventi sul testo non denunciano una paternità autoriale ma sono piuttosto da attribuirsi, secondo la studiosa, alla cerchia del cardinale Capranica, cui il manoscritto appartenne: trattandosi di un testo di propaganda politica, le poche ma importanti modifiche riferite da questo testimone rivelano finalità evidentemente ideologiche legate al suo contesto di circolazione.

Un peculiare processo di trasmissione del sapere è costituito poi dalle operazioni di copia simultanea di un manoscritto, sulle quali si sofferma l'articolo di Miika Kuha, traendo occasione dallo studio della tradizione del *De gestis, moribus et nobilitate civitatis Venetiarum* di Lorenzo de' Monaci. L'eccezionalità del contributo di Kuha riguarda in special modo la registrazione di tale pratica di copia, diffusa in epoca altomedievale e carolina, nel tardo medioevo, tenuto conto anche dell'inconsueta e fortunata preservazione di entrambi i manoscritti coinvolti nel procedimento di copia: l'antigrafo Venezia, BNM, lat. X, 143 (=3532), databile al XV secolo, e il suo apografo Venezia, BSPV, 798, copiato nella seconda o terza metà del XVI secolo.

Il contributo di Susanna Niiranen riporta, dal canto suo, al tema della trasmissione di un testo nel passaggio dalla sua forma manoscritta a quella a stampa: in particolare, la studiosa segue le vicissitudini della *Scondia illustrata*, composta dal prigioniero politico Johannes Massenius negli anni della sua incarcerazione (1616–1635) ed edita per la prima volta nel 1705. Niiranen disegna un percorso « bibliogeografico »⁹ dell'opera di Massenius, sottolineando come il processo di creazione di un testo possa coinvolgere vari personaggi ed essere fortemente legato al suo ambiente di formazione, aspetto che si rivela tanto più importante per testi appartenenti al genere storiografico, cui spesso sottende –

⁹ SUSANNA NIIRANEN, « From prison to print. Johannes Messenius' *Scondia illustrata* as a co-product of early modern prison writing », p. 154–155: « In this study, the method is applied to not only reveal the knotty journey of the manuscripts into print but also to investigate meanings related to the texts (to be printed) by various agents in the process ».

talvolta neppure velatamente – l'intenzione di diffondere determinate idee politiche.

Tra i membri fondatori del progetto *Tralmar*, Joëlle Ducos firma l'unico intervento relativo alla letteratura militare, volgendo l'attenzione alla versione francese di Nicolas Volcy, risalente al XVI secolo, degli *Epitoma rei militaris* di Vegetio. La studiosa esamina in primo luogo le caratteristiche della traduzione, influenzata dagli interessi dei lettori rinascimentali. Si verifica, infatti, un cambio di prospettiva nella ricezione di Vegetio dal testo originale a quello tradotto: il trattato militare latino *si traduce* in un'opera di formazione ed educazione. Anche le caratteristiche proprie dell'*editio princeps* stampata da Chrestien Wechel nel 1536 – mandante della traduzione – testimoniano la nuova finalità del libro, che raccoglie altre opere « autour de la chose militaire »¹⁰ e adopera espedienti grafici nuovi che ne palesano lo scopo didattico: ad esempio, come sottolinea la studiosa, l'uso della parentesi per aiutare la lettura del testo.

L'ultima parte del volume, dedicata alla poesia, analizza due facce diverse della produzione poetica italiana Quattro e Cinquecentesca, attraverso approcci di studio diversi tra loro, ma in entrambi i casi incentrati sul ricorso alla tradizione manoscritta contemporanea.

Lorenzo Amato definisce le caratteristiche di una produzione poetica che è specchio del contesto artistico-culturale della Firenze di Francesco I de' Medici, identificando due generazioni di poeti attivi nella seconda metà del XVI secolo, la cui opera si può riferire al genere dei madrigali 'alla Strozzi'. Per la definizione del *corpus* delle raccolte poetiche, oltre al riconoscimento di certe analogie della struttura micro e macro-testuale e dei modelli poetici e culturali, lo studioso tiene conto di vari aspetti della tradizione di tali testi, primo fra tutti il fatto di essere tramandati (quasi) esclusivamente in forma manoscritta, in ossequio a un riferimento programmatico comune.

Il recupero dei modelli poetici e culturali è centrale nello studio di Paul Gwynne, che ricorre ai commentari di Filippo Beroaldo il Vecchio per meglio definire la poetica di Francesco Sperulo, scrittore di elegie vissuto tra il XV e il XVI secolo: l'edizione di Properzio commentata dal maestro Beroaldo e pubblicata a Bologna nel 1487 rappresenta, infatti, il filtro attraverso il quale il poeta italiano aveva recepito l'elegia classica. Più in generale, l'Autore mette in luce come, per riconoscere l'influenza dei modelli classici nella composizione poetica neolatina, sia indispensabile tentare di identificare le fonti classiche realmente disponibili a quell'epoca, le quali spesso riferivano versioni che oggi riterremmo corrotte dei testi classici originali.

Ad uno sguardo complessivo, tutti i saggi raccolti nel volume apportano importanti avanzamenti degli studi, ciascuno negli ambiti di pertinenza relativi, e

¹⁰ JOËLLE DUCOS, « De la glose à la parenthèse. Traduire Végèce en français au XVI^e siècle », p. 171.

al contempo contribuiscono alla definizione di itinerari e metodologie di ricerca innovativi e trasversali, tutti fondati su prospettive di studio di impostazione primariamente codicologica. L'approccio apertamente e dichiaratamente interdisciplinare del progetto *Tralmar* tenta con successo, insomma, di colmare un *gap* di conoscenza nel difficile studio della trasmissione e diffusione del sapere tra basso Medioevo e Rinascimento. I contributi riferiti in questo volume costituiscono dei saggi esemplari di nuovi e specifici approcci metodologici che possono essere applicati a una sempre più vasta gamma di discipline il cui oggetto di studio è, in ultima analisi, il libro in quanto veicolo di sapere.

La raccolta di studi, nel suo impianto complessivo, risponde alle domande originariamente poste dai sottoscrittori del progetto *Tralmar*: riconoscendo le differenze e le analogie nei processi di trasmissione culturale tra tardo Medioevo e Rinascimento; portando alla luce gli aspetti materiali dei manoscritti che influenzano e palesano le modalità della diffusione del sapere nelle suddette epoche; affrontando il difficile tema del passaggio storico dal manoscritto al libro a stampa e ribadendo la necessità di guardare al contempo alle due forme di trasmissione dei testi per comprenderne le modalità di ricezione nel contesto culturale in cui erano letti e interpretati.

SHLOMO SELA, *ABRAHAM IBN EZRA'S INTRODUCTIONS TO ASTROLOGY. A PARALLEL HEBREW-ENGLISH CRITICAL EDITION OF THE BOOK OF THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM AND THE BOOK OF JUDGMENTS OF THE ZODIACAL SIGNS*, BRILL, LEIDEN – BOSTON 2017 (ÉTUDES SUR LE JUDAÏSME MÉDIÉVAL, 69; ABRAHAM IBN EZRA'S ASTROLOGICAL WRITINGS, 5), XIII + 822 PP., ISBN 9789004342279 (HBK), 9789004342286 (EBK)

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Abraham ibn Ezra (c. 1089–c. 1161) was born to a Jewish family in Andalusia where he obtained the typical Jewish education of his time that included Arabic culture and science. At that time he contributed to the field of *piyyut*, the Hebrew poesy. When he was aged 50 he started his life as a traveler through the Latin speaking world. During his stays in France, Italy, and England he wrote all of his Bible commentaries as well as all his contributions to sciences. To the latter field he contributed some thirty treatises that deal with mathematics, astronomy, the astrolabe and other scientific instruments, the Jewish calendar, and astrology. These scientific treatises were mainly written in Hebrew, although sometimes Ibn Ezra also might have written in Latin.

Nineteen of the scientific works deal with astrology. Among them we find three introductions to astrology (two are included in the present volume), two versions of the *Sefer ha-Te'amim* (« Book of Reasons »), in which the astrological reasons behind the concepts are explained, three different treatises on nativities, and eleven treatises on different aspects of astrology such as horoscopy, elections, interrogations, world astrology, and medical astrology. Since 2007 Shlomo Sela has undergone the task to critically edit all these works. The volume under review is the fifth of altogether six volumes planned (it appeared in 2019). All of Ibn Ezra's treatises on astrology have some characteristic features in common. Firstly, they all are derived from similar genres of the Graeco-Arabic astrology as can already be seen from their titles. Secondly, some of the treatises complement each other and from parts of a larger encyclopedia. Thirdly, Ibn Ezra usually produced two versions of treatises on one subject as he did with the Bible commentaries.

The volume under review opens with a general introduction into Ibn Ezra's astronomical works (p. 1–45). It is followed by the critical edition of the *Reshit Hokhmah* (« Book of the Beginning of Wisdom ») which is accompanied by an

English translation (p. 48–271). To this a commentary (« Notes ») is added (p. 275–485). A second edition with an English translation comprises the *Mishpeṭei ha-Mazzalot* (« Book of the Judgments of the Zodiacal Signs », p. 488–555) which again is followed by notes (p. 559–632). To these editions several Appendices are added. Firstly, a list of the manuscripts of the two treatises known so far is given (p. 635–639). Secondly, quotations of several Arabic treatises with English translations are added (Abu Mashar's *Kitāb al-mudkhal al-kabīr*, p. 640–661; Al-Qabīṣī's *Kitāb al-mudkhal* and the *Kitāb al-thamarah*, p. 662–666). A third kind of appendix are Hebrew texts with English translations from Ibn Ezra's *Ṭe'amim* (p. 667–676). In a separate table the places of the lots of the twelve zodiacal signs are presented synoptically (p. 677–690). Further appendices contain a « Hebrew-Arabic Technical Glossary » (p. 691–710) and two English-Hebrew glossaries of technical terms in *Reshit Ḥokhmah* (p. 711–753) and in *Mishpeṭei ha-Mazzalot* (p. 754–783) together with an index to the glossaries (p. 784–798). Further indices to authorities, sources, and technical terms within the editions (p. 799–806) are supplied. The volume is concluded by a « Bibliography » (p. 807–814) and a general index (p. 815–822).

Despite differences in length and style both treatises have in common that they serve as introductions into astrology. The longer *Reshit Ḥokhmah* seems to have been completed in summer of 1148; Ibn Ezra indicates himself as the translator of a passage of Abu Mashar. It contains approximately 28,000 words and is preserved in at least 70 manuscripts. The shorter *Mishpeṭei ha-Mazzalot* seems to have been written towards the end of Ibn Ezra's life in c. 1158. Although the author is not mentioned verbally it is likely that it was written by Ibn Ezra because he refers to further works of his. Nonetheless the treatise is still extant in 25 copies which all bear markers of a reworking either by Ibn Ezra or his copyists. That later introduction has only one third of length of the first one (c. 9,500 words). The longer introduction is divided into ten chapters whereas the shorter one is not divided into chapters but follows a series of catchwords.

Both treatises have in common that they explain the zodiacal signs and the planetary dignities which depend on the position of the planets in the signs as the basis of all astrological enterprises. Accordingly, the aspects, the quadrants of the horoscopic chart, and the twelve horoscopic places are demonstrated. Another topic are the natures and significations of the seven planets and their powers and weaknesses as well as their fortunes and misfortunes, their changing positions in relation to the sun in connection with their movement in the orbs. From that their meaning for nativities, anniversaries, and so on, are derived. Both deal with the lots of the planets and the lots of the twelve horoscopic places, but put different emphasis in their elaboration within the respective treatise. In the final section of each treatise the projection of the planet's ray and the directions are presented.

Beside the astrological contents Ibn Ezra also deals with some astronomical features, among them 48 Ptolemaic constellations. According to the editor it is the first occurrence within a twelfth-century text.

The editor and translator Shlomo Sela is to be commended for his careful editorial work as well as for the easy-to-read translation. The only minor mistake worth mentioning is that in the list of manuscripts in two cases the same folios are give for the two different treatises (see p. 635 # 4 / p. 638 # 1 and p. 638 # 70 / 639 # 25).

